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DON JUAN.

CANTOS IX.—X.—AND XI.

“Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more
Cakes and Ale?”—“Yes, by St. Anne; and Ginger shall be hot i’ the
mouth too!”—*Twelfth Night, or What you Will.*

SHAKESPEARE.

LONDON, 1823:

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DON JUAN.

CANTO IX.



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CANTO IX.

I.

OH, Wellington! (or "Vilainton"—for Fame

Sounds the heroic syllables both ways ;

France could not even conquer your great name,

But punned it down to this facetious phrase—

Beating or beaten she will laugh the same)—

You have obtained great pensions and much praise;

Glory like yours should any dare gainsay,

Humanity would rise, and thunder "Nay!" (¹)

II.

I don't think that you used K—n—rd quite well
In Marinét's affair—in fact 'twas shabby,
And like some other things won't do to tell
Upon your tomb in Westminster's old abbey.
Upon the rest 'tis not worth while to dwell,
Such tales being for the tea hours of some tabby;
But though your years as *man* tend fast to zero,
In fact your Grace is still but a *young Hero*.

III.

Though Britain owes (and pays you too) so much,
Yet Europe doubtless owes you greatly more :
You have repaired Legitimacy's crutch,—
A prop not quite so certain as before :
The Spanish, and the French, as well as Dutch,
Have seen, and felt, how strongly you *restore* :
And Waterloo has made the world your debtor—
(I wish your bards would sing it rather *better*.)

IV.

You are "the best of cut-throats:"—do not start;

The phrase is Shakspeare's, and not misapplied:—

War's a brain-spattering, windpipe-slitting art,

Unless her cause by Right be sanctified.

If you have acted *once* a generous part,

The World, not the World's masters, will decide,

And I shall be delighted to learn who,

Save you and yours, have gained by Waterloo?

V.

I am no flatterer—you've supped full of flattery:

They say you like it too—'tis no great wonder:

He whose whole life has been assault and battery,

At last may get a little tired of thunder;

And swallowing eulogy much more than satire, he

May like being praised for every lucky blunder;

Called "Saviour of the Nations"—not yet saved,

And Europe's Liberator—still enslaved.

VI.

I've done. Now go and dine from off the plate

Presented by the Prince of the Brazils,

And send the sentinel before your gate (?)

A slice or two from your luxurious meals :

He fought, but has not fed so well of late.

Some hunger too they say the people feels :—

There is no doubt that you deserve your ration,

But pray give back a little to the nation.

VII.

I don't mean to reflect—a man so great as

You, my Lord Duke! is far above reflection.

The high Roman fashion too of Cincinnatus,

With modern history has but small connection

Though as an Irishman you love potatoes,

You need not take them under your direction ;

And half a million for your Sabine farm

Is rather dear !—I'm sure I mean no harm.

VIII.

Great men have always scorned great recompenses :

Epaminondas saved his Thebes, and died,

Not leaving even his funeral expenses :

George Washington had thanks and nought beside,

Except the all-cloudless Glory (which few men's is)

To free his country : Pitt too had his pride,

And, as a high-soul'd Minister of State, is

Renowned for ruining Great Britain gratis.

IX.

Never had mortal Man such opportunity,

Except Napoleon, or abused it more :

You might have freed fall'n Europe from the Unity

Of Tyrants, and been blest from shore to shore :

And *now*—What *is* your fame? Shall the Muse tune it ye?

Now—that the rabble's first vain shouts are o'er?

Go, hear it in your famished Country's cries!

Behold the World! and curse your victories!

X.

As these new Cantos touch on warlike feats,

To *you* the unflattering Muse deigns to inscribe
Truths that you will not read in the Gazettes,

But which, 'tis time to teach the hireling tribe
Who fatten on their Country's gore and debts,

Must be recited, and—without a bribe.

You *did great* things ; but not being *great* in mind,
Have left *undone* the *greatest*—and mankind.

XI.

Death laughs—Go ponder o'er the skeleton

With which men image out the unknown thing
That hides the past world, like to a set sun

Which still elsewhere may rouse a brighter spring,—
Death laughs at all you weep for :—look upon

This hourly dread of all, whose *threatened sting*
Turns life to terror, even though in its sheath !
Mark ! how its lipless mouth grins without breath !

XII.

Mark ! how it laughs and scorns at all you are !

And yet *was* what you are : from *ear* to *ear*

It *laughs not*—there is now no fleshy bar

So called ; the Antic long hath ceased to *hear*,

But still he *smiles* ; and whether near or far

He strips from man that mantle (far more dear

Than even the tailor's) his incarnate skin,

White, black, or copper—the dead bones will grin.

XIII.

And thus Death laughs,—it is sad merriment,

But still it *is* so ; and with such example

Why should not Life be equally content,

With his Superior, in a smile to trample

Upon the nothings which are daily spent

Like bubbles on an ocean much less ample

Than the eternal deluge, which devours.

Suns as rays—worlds like atoms—years like hours ?

XIV.

“ To be or not to be! that is the question,”

Says Shakespeare, who just now is much in fashion.

I am neither Alexander nor Hephæstion,

Nor ever had for *abstract* fame much passion ;

But would much rather have a sound digestion,

Than Buonaparte's cancer :—could I dash on
Through fifty victories to shame or fame,
Without a stomach—what were a good name ?

XV.

“ Oh dura ilia messorum !”—“ Oh

“ Ye rigid guts of reapers !”—I translate

For the great benefit of those who know

What Indigestion is—that inward fate

Which makes all Styx though one small liver flow.

A peasant's sweat is worth his Lord's estate :

Let *this* one toil for bread—*that* rack for rent,

He who sleeps best, may be the most content.

XVI.

“ To be or not to be ? ”—Ere I decide,

I should be glad to know that which is *being* ?

’Tis true we speculate both far and wide,

And deem, because we *see*, we are *all-seeing* :

For my part, I’ll enlist on neither side,

Until I see both sides for once agreeing.

For me, I sometimes think that Life is Death,

Rather than Life a mere affair of breath.

XVII.

“ Que sçais-je ? ” was the motto of Montaigne,

As also of the first Academicians :

That all is dubious which Man may attain,

Was one of their most favourite positions.

There’s no such thing as certainty, that’s plain

As any of Mortality’s Conditions :

So little do we know what we’re about in

This world, I doubt if doubt itself be doubting.

XVIII.

It is a pleasant voyage perhaps to float,
Like Pyrrho, on a sea of speculation ;
But what if carrying sail capsize the boat ?
Your wise men don't know much of navigation ;
And swimming long in the abyss of thought
Is apt to tire : a calm and shallow station
Well nigh the shore, where one stoops down and gathers
Some pretty shell, is best for moderate bathers.

XIX.

" But Heaven," as Cassio says, " is above all,—
" No more of this then,—let us pray!" We have
Souls to save, since Eve's slip and Adam's fall,
Which tumbled all mankind into the grave,
Besides fish, beasts, and birds. " The Sparrow's fall
" Is special providence," though how it gave
Offence, we know not; probably it perched
Upon the tree which Eve so fondly searched.

XX.

Oh, ye immortal Gods! what is Theogony?

Oh, thou too mortal Man! what is Philanthropy?

Oh, World! which was and is, what is Cosmogony?

Some people have accused me of Misanthropy;

And yet I know no more than the mahogany

That forms this desk, of what they mean;—*Lykanthropy*

I comprehend, for without transformation

Men become wolves on any slight occasion.

XXI.

But I, the mildest, meekest of mankind,

Like Moses, or Melancthon, who have ne'er

Done any thing exceedingly unkind;—

And (though I could not now and then forbear

Following the bent of body or of mind)

Have always had a tendency to spare,—

Why do they call me misanthrope? Because

They hate me, not I them:—And here we'll pause.

XXII.

'Tis time we should proceed with our good poem,
For I maintain that it is really good,
Not only in the body, but the proem,
However little both are understood
Just now,—but by and by the Truth will show 'em
Herself in her sublimest attitude :
And till she doth, I fain must be content
To share her Beauty and her Banishment.

XXIII.

Our Hero (and, I trust, kind reader ! your's)—
Was left upon his way to the chief City
Of the immortal Peter's polished boors,
Who still have shown themselves more brave than witty.
I know its mighty Empire now allures
Much flattery—even Voltaire's, and that's a pity.
For me, I deem an absolute Autocrat
Not a Barbarian, but much worse than that.

XXIV.

And I will war, at least in words (and—should

My chance so happen—deeds) with all who war
With Thought;—and of Thought's foes by far most rude,

Tyrants and Sycophants have been and are.

I know not who may conquer: if I could

Have such a prescience, it should be no bar
To this my plain, sworn, downright detestation
Of every despotism in every nation.

XXV.

It is not that I adulate the people:

Without *me*, there are Demagogues enough,
And Infidels, to pull down every steeple

And set up in their stead some proper stuff.
Whether they may sow Scepticism to reap Hell,

As is the Christian dogma rather rough,
I do not know;—I wish men to be free
As much from mobs as kings—from you as me.

XXVI.

The consequence is, being of no party,
I shall offend all parties :—never mind !
My words, at least, are more sincere and hearty
Than if I sought to sail before the wind.
He who has nought to gain can have small art : he
Who neither wishes to be bound nor bind,
May still expatiate freely, as will I,
Nor give my voice to Slavery's Jackall cry.

XXVII.

That's an appropriate simile, *that Jackall* ;—
I've heard them in the Ephesian ruins howl
By night, as do that mercenary pack all,
Power's base purveyors, who for pickings prowl,
And scent the prey their masters would attack all.
However, the poor Jackalls are less foul
(As being the brave Lions' keen providers)
Than human Insects, catering for Spiders.

XXVIII.

Raise but an arm ! 'twill brush their web away,
And without *that*, their poison and their claws
Are useless. Mind, good People ! what I say—
(Or rather Peoples)—*go on* without pause !
The web of these Tarantulas each day
Increases, till you shall make common cause :
None, save the Spanish Fly and Attic Bee,
As yet are strongly stinging to be free.

XXIX.

Don Juan, who had shone in the late slaughter,
Was left upon his way with the dispatch,
Where Blood was talked of as we would of Water ;
And carcases that lay as thick as thatch
O'er silenced cities, merely served to flatter
Fair Catherine's pastime,—who looked on the match
Between these nations as a main of cocks,
Wherein she liked her own to stand like rocks.

XXX.

And there in a *kibitka* he rolled on,
(A cursed sort of carriage without springs,
Which on rough roads leaves scarcely a whole bone)
Pondering on glory, chivalry, and kings,
And orders, and on all that he had done—
And wishing that post horses had the wings
Of Pegasus—or, at the least, post chaises
Had feathers, when a traveller on deep ways is.

XXXI.

At every jolt—and they were many—still
He turned his eyes upon his little charge,
As if he wished that she should fare less ill
Than he, in these sad highways left at large
To ruts, and flints, and lovely Nature's skill,
Who is no paviour, nor admits a barge
On *her* canals, where God takes sea and land,
Fishery and farm, both into his own hand.

XXXII.

At least he pays no rent, and has best right
To be the first of what we used to call
“Gentlemen Farmers”—a race worn out quite,
Since lately there have been no rents at all,
And “gentlemen” are in a piteous plight,
And “farmers” can’t raise Ceres from her fall.
She fell with Buonaparte :—What strange thoughts
Arise, when we see Emperors fall with oats !

XXXIII.

But Juan turned his eyes on the sweet child
Whom he had saved from slaughter—what a trophy !
Oh ! ye who build up monuments, defiled
With gore, like Nadir Shah, that costive Sophy,
Who, after leaving Hindostan a wild,
And scarce to the Mogul a cup of coffee
To soothe his woes withal, was slain—the sinner !
Because he could no more digest his dinner ;— (8)

XXXIV.

Oh ye! or we! or he! or she! reflect,
That *one* life saved, especially if young
Or pretty, is a thing to recollect
Far sweeter than the greenest laurels sprung
From the manure of human clay, though decked
With all the praises ever said or sung :
Though hymned by every harp, unless within
Your Heart joins Chorus, Fame is but a din.

XXXV.

Oh, ye great Authors luminous, voluminous !
Ye twice ten hundred thousand daily scribes,
Whose pamphlets, volumes, newspapers illumine us !
Whether you're paid by Government in bribes,
To prove the public debt is not consuming us—
Or, roughly treading on the " Courtier's kibes"
With clownish heel, your popular circulation
Feeds you by printing half the realm's Starvation ;—

XXXVI.

Oh, ye great Authors !—" Apropos des bottes"—

I have forgotten what I meant to say,

As sometimes have been greater Sages' lots ;—

'Twas something calculated to allay

All wrath in barracks, palaces, or cots :

Certes it would have been but thrown away,

And that's one comfort for my lost advice,

Although no doubt it was beyond all price.

XXXVII.

But let it go :—it will one day be found

With other relics of " a former world,"

When this world shall be *former*, underground,

Thrown topsy-turvy, twisted, crisped, and curled,

Baked, fried, or burnt, turned inside-out, or drowned,

Like all the worlds before, which have been hurled

First out of and then back again to Chaos,

The Superstratum which will overlay us.

XXXVIII.

So Cuvier says ;—and then shall come again
Unto the new Creation, rising out
From our old crash, some mystic, ancient strain
Of things destroyed and left in airy doubt :
Like to the notions we now entertain
Of Titans, Giants, fellows of about
Some hundred feet in height, *not* to say *miles*,
And Mammoths, and your winged Crocodiles.

XXXIX.

Think if then George the Fourth should be dug up !
How the new worldlings of the then new East
Will wonder where such animals could sup !
(For they themselves will be but of the least :
Even worlds miscarry, when too oft they pup,
And every new Creation hath decreased
In size, from overworking the material—
Men are but maggots of some huge Earth's burial.)

XL.

How will—to these young people, just thrust out
From some fresh Paradise, and set to plough,
And dig, and sweat, and turn themselves about,
And plant, and reap, and spin, and grind, and sow,
Till all the Arts at length are brought about,
Especially of war and taxing,—how,
I say, will these great relics, when they see 'em,
Look like the monsters of a new Museum?

XLI.

But I am apt to grow too metaphysical:
“The time is out of joint,”—and so am I;
I quite forget this poem's merely quizzical,
And deviate into matters rather dry.
I ne'er decide what I shall say, and this I call
Much too poetical. Men should know why
They write, and for what end; but, note or text,
I never know the word which will come next.

XLII.

So on I ramble, now and then narrating,

Now pondering :—it is time we should narrate :

I left Don Juan with his horses baiting—

Now we'll get o'er the ground at a great rate.

I shall not be particular in stating

His journey, we've so many tours of late :

Suppose him then at Petersburg ; suppose

That pleasant capital of painted Snows ;

XLIII.

Suppose him in a handsome uniform ;

A scarlet coat, black facings, a long plume,

Waving, like sails new shivered in a storm,

Over a cocked hat in a crowded room,

And brilliant breeches, bright as a Cairn Gorme,

Of yellow cassimere we may presume,

White stockings drawn, uncurdled as new milk,

O'er limbs whose symmetry set off the silk :

XLIV.

Suppose him sword by side, and hat in hand,
Made up by Youth, Fame, and an Army tailor—
That great Enchanter, at whose rod's command
Beauty springs forth, and Nature's self turns paler,
Seeing how Art can make her work more grand,
(When she don't pin men's limbs in like a jailor)—
Behold him placed as if upon a pillar! He
Seems Love turned a Lieutenant of Artillery!

XLV.

His Bandage slipped down into a cravat;
His Wings subdued to epaulettes; his Quiver
Shrunk to a scabbard, with his Arrows at
His side as a small sword, but sharp as ever;
His Bow converted into a cocked hat;
But still so like, that Psyche were more clever
Than some wives (who make blunders no less stupid)
If She had not mistaken him for Cupid.

XLVI.

The courtiers stared, the ladies whispered, and
The Empress smiled; the reigning favourite frowned—
I quite forget which of them was in hand
Just then, as they are rather numerous found,
Who took by turns that difficult command
Since first her Majesty was singly crowned :
But they were mostly nervous six-foot fellows,
All fit to make a Patagonian jealous.

XLVII.

Juan was none of these, but slight and slim,
Blushing and beardless; and yet ne'ertheless
There was a something in his turn of limb,
And still more in his eye, which seemed to express
That though he looked one of the Seraphim,
There lurked a Man beneath the Spirit's dress.
Besides, the Empress sometimes liked a boy,
And had just buried the fair faced Lanskoï. (4)

XLVIII.

No wonder then that Yermoloff, or Momonoff,
Or Scherbatoff, or any other *off*
Or *on*, might dread her Majesty had not room enough
Within her bosom (which was not too tough)
For a new flame; a thought to cast of gloom enough
Along the aspect whether smooth or rough
Of him who, in the language of his station,
Then held that "high official situation."

XLIX.

Oh, gentle ladies! should you seek to know
The import of this diplomatic phrase,
Bid Ireland's Londonderry's Marquess (^b) show
His parts of speech; and in the strange displays
Of that odd string of words, all in a row,
Which none divine, and every one obeys,
Perhaps you may pick out some queer *no-meaning*,
Of that weak wordy harvest the sole gleanings.

L.

I think I can explain myself without
That sad inexplicable beast of prey—
That Sphinx, whose words would ever be a doubt,
Did not his deeds unriddle them each day—
That monstrous Hieroglyphic—that long Spout
Of blood and water, leaden Castlereagh!
And here I must an anecdote relate,
But luckily of no great length or weight.

LI.

An English lady asked of an Italian,
What were the actual and official duties
Of the strange thing some Women set a value on,
Which hovers oft about some married Beauties,
Called “ Cavalier Servente ?”—a Pygmalion
Whose statues warm (I fear, alas ! too true 'tis)
Beneath his Art. The dame, pressed to disclose them,
Said—“ Lady, I beseech you to *suppose them*.”

LII.

And thus I supplicate your supposition,

And mildest, Matron-like interpretation
Of the Imperial Favourite's Condition.

'Twas a high place, the highest in the nation
In fact, if not in rank ; and the suspicion

Of any one's attaining to his station,
No doubt gave pain, where each new pair of shoulders,
If rather broad, made stocks rise and their holders.

LIII.

Juan, I said, was a most beauteous Boy,

And had retained his boyish look beyond
The usual hirsute seasons which destroy,

With beards and whiskers and the like, the fond
Parisian aspect which upset old Troy

And founded Doctor's Commons :—I have conned
The history of divorces, which, though chequered,
Calls Ilion's the first damages on record.

LIV.

And Catherine, who loved all things (save her lord,
Who was gone to his place) and passed for much,
Admiring those (by dainty dames abhorred)
Gigantic Gentlemen, yet had a touch
Of Sentiment; and he She most adored
Was the lamented Lanskoï, who was such
A lover as had cost her many a tear,
And yet but made a middling grenadier.

LV.

Oh, thou "teterrima Causa" of all "belli"—
Thou gate of Life and Death—thou nondescript!
Whence is our exit and our entrance,—well I
May pause in pondering how all Souls are dipt
In thy perrennial fountain :—how man *fell*, I
Know not, since Knowledge saw her branches stript
Of her first fruit; but how he falls and rises
Since, Thou hast settled beyond all surmises.

LVI.

Some call thee "the worst Cause of war," but I
Maintain thou art the *best* : for after all
From thee we come, to thee we go, and why
To get at thee not batter down a wall,
Or waste a world ? Since no one can deny
Thou dost replenish worlds both great and small :
With, or without thee, all things at a stand
Are, or would be, thou Sea of Life's dry Land !

LVII.

Catherine, who was the grand Epitome
Of that great Cause of war, or peace, or what
You please (it causes all the things which be,
So you may take your choice of this or that)—
Catherine, I say, was very glad to see
The handsome herald, on whose plumage sat
Victory ; and, pausing as she saw him kneel
With his dispatch, forgot to break the seal.

LVIII.

Then recollecting the whole Empress, nor
Forgetting quite the woman (which composed
At least three parts of this great whole) she tore
The letter open with an air which posed
The Court, that watched each look her visage wore,
Until a royal smile at length disclosed
Fair weather for the day. Though rather spacious,
Her face was noble, her eyes fine, mouth gracious.

LIX.

Great joy was her's, or rather joys; the first
Was a ta'en city—thirty thousand slain.
Glory and triumph o'er her aspect burst,
As an East Indian Sunrise on the main.
These quenched a moment her Ambition's thirst—
So Arab Deserts drink in Summer's rain :
In vain!—As fall the dews on quenchless sands,
Blood only serves to wash Ambition's hands !

LX.

Her next amusement was more fanciful ;

She smiled at mad Suwarrow's rhymes, who threw
Into a Russian couplet rather dull

The whole gazette of thousands whom he slew.

Her third was feminine enough to annul

The shudder which runs naturally through
Our veins, when things called Sovereigns think it best
To kill, and Generals turn it into jest.

LXI.

The two first feelings ran their course complete,

And lighted first her eye and then her mouth :

The whole Court looked immediately most sweet,

Like flowers well watered after a long drouth :—

But when on the Lieutenant at her feet

Her Majesty, who liked to gaze on youth

Almost as much as on a new dispatch,

Glanced mildly, all the world was on the watch.

LXII.

Though somewhat large, exuberant, and truculent,
When *wroth* ; while *pleased*, she was as fine a figure
As those who like things rosy, ripe, and succulent,
Would wish to look on, while they are in vigour.
She could repay each amatory look you lent
With interest, and in turn was wont with rigour
To exact of Cupid's bills the full amount
At sight, nor would permit you to discount.

LXIII.

With her the latter, though at times convenient,
Was not so necessary ; for they tell
That she was handsome, and though fierce *looked* lenient,
And always used her favourites too well.
If once beyond her boudoir's precincts in ye went,
Your " Fortune " was in a fair way " to swell
A Man," as Giles says ; ⁽⁶⁾ for though she would widow all
Nations, she liked Man as an individual.

LXIV.

What a strange thing is man ! and what a stranger

Is woman ! What a whirlwind is her head,

And what a whirlpool full of depth and danger

Is all the rest about her ! Whether wed,

Or widow, maid, or mother, she can change her

Mind like the wind ; whatever she has said

Or done, is light to what she'll say or do ;—

The oldest thing on record, and yet new !

LXV.

Oh Catherine ! (for of all interjections

To thee both *oh* ! and *ah* ! belong of right

In love and war) how odd are the connections

Of human thoughts, which jostle in their flight !

Just now *your's* were cut out in different sections :

First Ismail's capture caught your fancy quite ;

Next of new knights, the fresh and glorious hatch ;

And *thirdly*, he who brought you the dispatch !

LXVI.

Shakspeare talks of "the Herald Mercury

"New lighted on a Heaven-kissing hill;"

And some such visions crossed her Majesty,

While her young Herald knelt before her still.

'Tis very true the hill seemed rather high

For a Lieutenant to climb up; but skill

Smoothed even the Simplon's steep, and by God's
blessing,

With Youth and Health all kisses are "heaven-kissing."

LXVII.

Her Majesty looked down, the Youth looked up—

And so they fell in love:—She with his face,

His grace, his God-knows-what: for Cupid's cup

With the first draught intoxicates apace,

A quintessential laudanum or "black drop,"

Which makes one drunk at once, without the base
Expedient of full bumpers; for the eye

In love drinks all life's fountains (save tears) dry.

LXVIII.

He, on the other hand, if not in love;

Fell into that no less imperious passion,

Self-love—which, when some sort of Thing above

Ourselves; a singer, dancer, much in fashion,

Or dutchess, princess, Empress, “deigns to prove,”

(’Tis Pope’s phrase) a great longing, tho’ a rash one,

For one especial person out of many,

Makes us believe ourselves as good as any:

LXIX

Besides, he was of that delighted age

Which makes all female ages equal—when

We don’t much care with whom we may engage

As bold as Daniel in the Lion’s den,

So that we can our native Sun assuage

In the next Ocean, which may flow just then,

To make a twilight in, just as Sol’s heat is

Quenched in the lap of the salt Sea, or Thetis.

LXX.

And Catherine (we must say thus much for Catherine)
Though bold and bloody, was the kind of thing
Whose temporary passion was quite flattering,
Because each lover looked a sort of king,
Made up upon an amatory pattern,
A royal husband in all save the *ring*—
Which, being the damn'dest part of matrimony,
Seemed taking out the sting to leave the honey.

LXXI.

And when you add to this, her womanhood
In its meridian, her blue eyes, or grey—
(The last, if they have soul, are quite as good,
Or better, as the best examples say :
Napoleon's, Mary's (Queen of Scotland) should
Lend to that colour a transcendant ray ;
And Pallas also sanctions the same hue,
Too wise to look through Optics black or blue)—

LXXII.

Her sweet smile, and her then majestic figure,
Her plumpness, her imperial condescension,
Her preference of a boy to men much bigger,
(Fellows whom Messalina's self would pension)
Her prime of life, just now in juicy vigour,
With other *extras*, which we need not mention,—
All these, or any one of these, explain
Enough to make a stripling very vain.

LXXIII.

And that's enough, for love is vanity,
Selfish in its beginning as its end,
Except where 'tis a mere Insanity,
A Maddening Spirit which would strive to blend
Itself with Beauty's frail Inanity,
On which the passion's self seems to depend :
And hence some heathenish philosophers
Make Love the Main Spring of the Universe.

LXXIV.

Besides Platonic love, besides the love
Of God, the love of Sentiment, the loving
Of faithful pairs—(I needs must rhyme with dove,
That good old steam-boat which keeps verses moving
'Gainst Reason—Reason ne'er was hand-and-glove
With rhyme, but always leant less to improving
The sound than sense)—besides all these pretences
To Love, there are those things which Words name
Senses ;—

LXXV.

Those movements, those improvements in our bodies
Which make all bodies anxious to get out
Of their own sand-pits to mix with a Goddess,
For such all Women are at first no doubt.
How beautiful that moment ! and how odd is
That fever which precedes the languid rout
Of our Sensations ! What a curious way
The whole thing is of clothing souls in clay !

LXXVI.

The noblest kind of Love is Love Platonical,
To end or to begin with ; the next grand
Is that which may be christened Love Canonical,
Because the clergy take the thing in hand ;
The third sort to be noted in our Chronicle
As flourishing in every Christian land,
Is, when chaste Matrons to their other ties
Add what may be called *Marriage in Disguise*.

LXXVII.

Well, we won't analyze—our story must
Tell for itself: the Sovereign was smitten,
Juan much flattered by her love, or lust ;—
I cannot stop to alter words once written,
And the two are so mixed with human dust,
That he who *names one*, both perchance may hit on :
But in such matters Russia's mighty Empress
Behaved no better than a common Sempstress.

LXXVIII.

The whole Court melted into one wide whisper,
And all lips were applied unto all ears !
The elder ladies' wrinkles curled much crisper
As they beheld ; the younger cast some leers
On one another, and each lovely lisper
Smiled as she talked the matter o'er ; but tears
Of rivalship rose in each clouded eye
Of all the standing army who stood by.

LXXIX.

All the Ambassadors of all the Powers
Inquired, Who was this very new young man,
Who promised to be great in some few hours ?
Which is full soon (though life is but a span.)
Already they beheld the silver showers
Of rubles rain, as fast as specie can,
Upon his cabinet, besides the presents
Of several ribbons and some thousand peasants.

LXXX.

Catherine was generous,—all such ladies are :

Love, that great opener of the heart and all
The ways that lead there, be they near or far,
Above, below, by turnpikes great or small,—
Love—(though she had a cursed taste for war,

And was not the best wife, unless we call
Such Clytemnestra ; though perhaps 'tis better
That one should die, than two drag on the fetter)—

LXXXI.

Love had made Catherine make each lover's fortune ;

Unlike our own half-chaste Elizabeth,
Whose avarice all disbursements did importune,
If History, the grand liar, ever saith
The truth ; and though Grief her old age might shorten,
Because she put a favourite to death,
Her vile, ambiguous method of flirtation,
And Stinginess, disgrace her Sex and Station.

LXXXII.

But when the levee rose, and all was bustle
In the dissolving Circle, all the nations'
Ambassadors began as 'twere to hustle
Round the young man with their congratulations.
Also the softer silks were heard to rustle
Of gentle dames, among whose recreations
It is to speculate on handsome faces,
Especially when such lead to high places.

LXXXIII.

Juan, who found himself, he knew not how,
A general object of attention, made
His answers with a very graceful bow
As if born for the Ministerial trade.
Though modest, on his unembarrassed brow
Nature had written "gentleman." He said
Little, but to the purpose; and his manner
Flung hovering Graces o'er him like a banner.

LXXXIV.

An order from her Majesty consigned

Our young Lieutenant to the genial care

Of those in office : all the World looked kind

(As it will look sometimes with the first stare,

Which Youth would not act ill to keep in mind)

As also did Miss Protasoff then there,

Named from her mystic office " l'Epreuveuse,"

A term inexplicable to the Muse.

LXXXV.

With *her* then, as in humble duty bound,

Juan retired,—and so will I, until

My Pegasus shall tire of touching ground.

We have just lit on a " Heaven-kissing hill,"

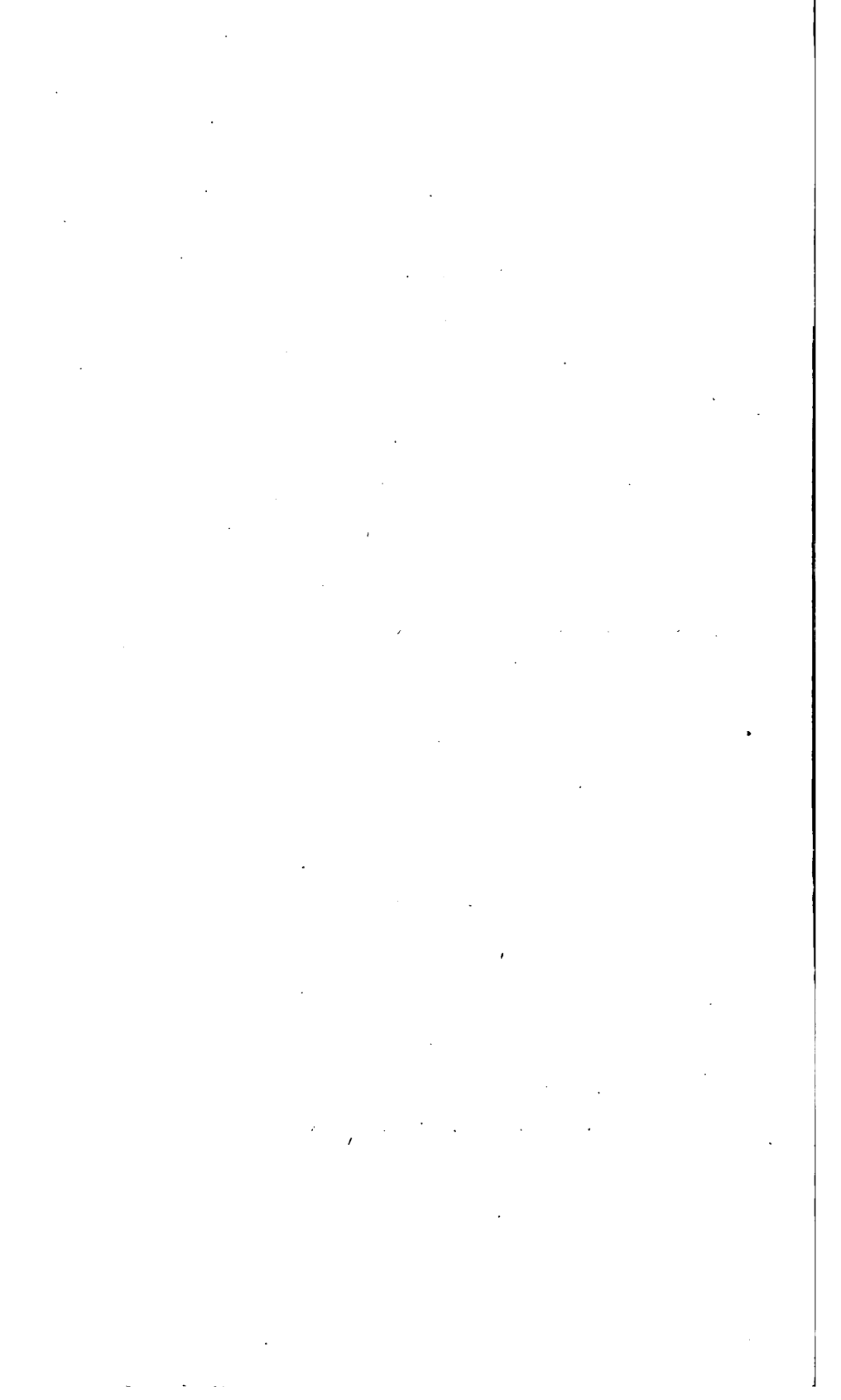
So lofty that I feel my brain turn round,

And all my fancies whirling like a mill ;

Which is a signal to my nerves and brain,

To take a quiet ride in some green lane.

END OF CANTO THE NINTH.



NOTES TO CANTO IX.

Note 1, page 5, stanza i.

Humanity would rise, and thunder "Nay!"

Query, *Nay?*—PRINTER'S DEVIL.

Note 2, page 8, stanza vi.

And send the sentinel before your gate

A slice or two from your luxurious meals.

"I at this time got a post, being for fatigue, with four others. We were sent to break biscuit, and make a mess for Lord Wellington's hounds. I was very hungry, and thought it a good job at the time, as we got our own fill while we broke the biscuit,—a thing I had not got for some days. When thus engaged, the Prodigal Son was never once out of my mind; and I sighed, as I fed the dogs, over my humble situation and my ruined hopes."—*Journal of a Soldier of the 71st Regt. during the War in Spain.*

Note 3, page 21, stanza xxxiii.

Because he could no more digest his dinner.

He was killed in a conspiracy, after his temper had been exasperated by his extreme costivity to a degree of insanity.

Note 4, page 28, stanza xlvii.

And had just buried the fair-faced Lanskoi.

He was the "grande passion" of the grande Catherine.—
See her Lives, under the head of "Lanskoi."

Note 5, page 29, stanza xlix.

*Bid Ireland's Londonderry's Marquess show
His parts of speech.*

This was written long before the suicide of that person.

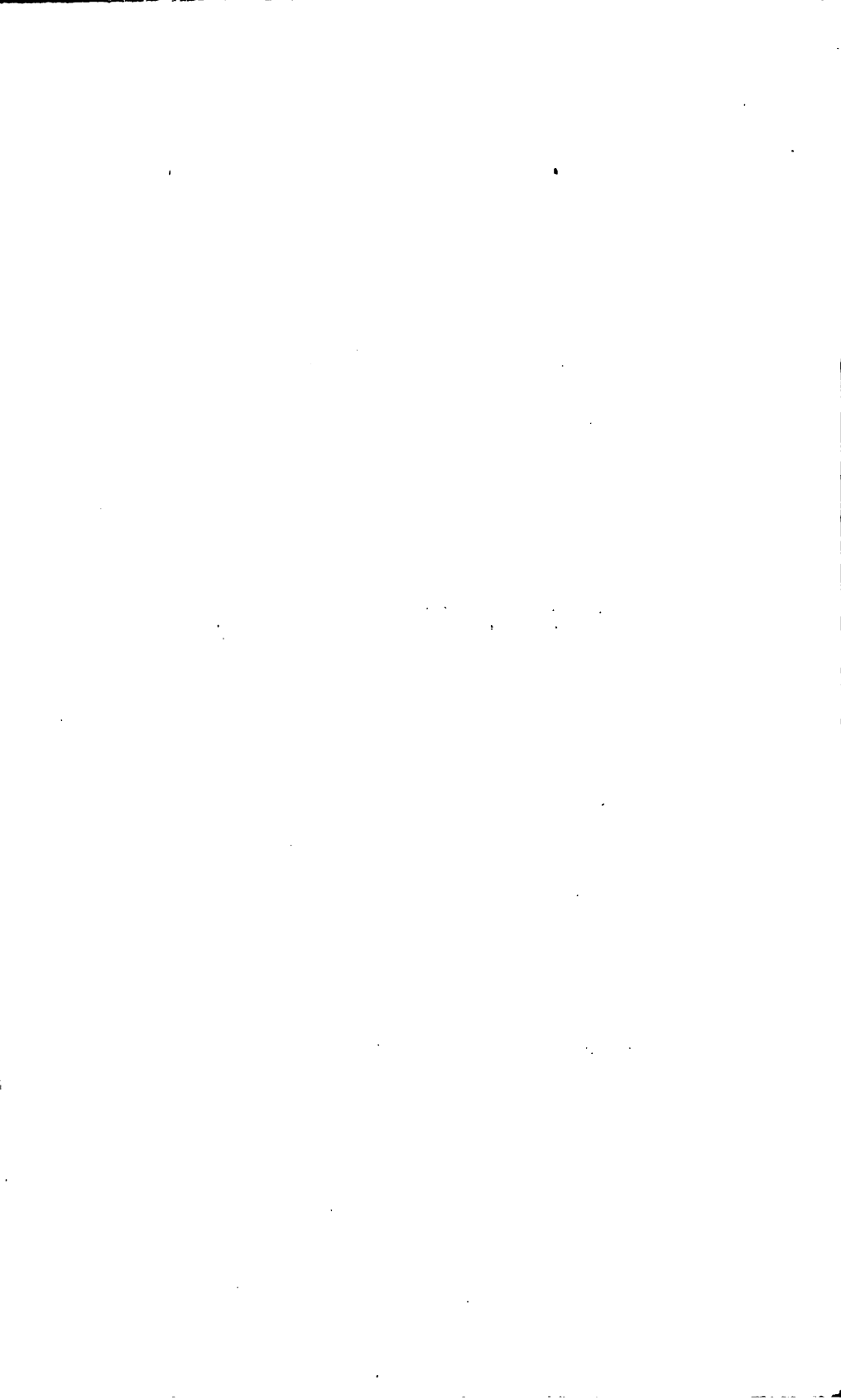
Note 6, page 36, stanza lxiii.

*Your "Fortune" was in a fair way "to swell
A Man," as Giles says.*

"His fortune swells him, it is rank, he's married."—Sir
Giles Overreach; Massinger.—See "A New Way to Pay Old
Debts."

DON JUAN.

CANTO X.



DON JUAN.

CANTO X.

I.

WHEN Newton saw an apple fall, he found

In that slight startle from his contemplation—

'Tis *said* (for I'll not answer above ground

For any sage's creed or calculation)—

A mode of proving that the earth turned round

In a most natural whirl called " Gravitation; "

And this is the sole mortal who could grapple,

Since Adam, with a fall, or with an apple.

II.

Man fell with apples, and with apples rose,
If this be true ; for we must deem the mode
In which Sir Isaac Newton could disclose
Through the then unpaved stars the turnpike road,
A thing to counterbalance human woes ;
For ever since immortal man hath glowed
With all kinds of mechanics, and full soon
Steam-engines will conduct him to the Moon.

III.

And wherefore this exordium ?—Why, just now,
In taking up this paltry sheet of paper,
My bosom underwent a glorious glow,
And my internal Spirit cut a caper :
And though so much inferior, as I know,
To those who, by the dint of glass and vapour,
Discover stars, and sail in the wind's eye,
I wish to do as much by Poesy.

IV.

In the Wind's Eye I have sailed, and sail ; but for
The stars, I own my telescope is dim ;
But at the least I have shunned the common shore,
And leaving land far out of sight, would skim
The Ocean of Eternity : the roar
Of breakers has not daunted my slight, trim,
But *still* sea-worthy skiff ; and she may float
Where ships have foundered, as doth many a boat.

V.

We left our hero, Juan, in the *bloom*
Of favouritism, but not yet in the *blush* ;—
And far be it from my *Muses* to presume
(For I have more than one Muse at a push)
To follow him beyond the drawing-room :
It is enough that Fortune found him flush
Of youth, and vigour, beauty, and those things
Which for an instant clip Enjoyment's wings.

VI.

But soon they grow again and leave their nest.

“ Oh !” saith the Psalmist, “ that I had a dove’s
“ Pinions to flee away, and be at rest !”

And who, that recollects young years and loves,—
Though hoary now, and with a withering breast,
And palsied Fancy, which no longer roves
Beyond its dimmed eye’s sphere,—but would much
rather
Sigh like his son, than cough like his grandfather ?

VII.

But sighs subside, and tears (even widow’s) shrink,
Like Arno in the summer, to a shallow,
So narrow as to shame their wintry brink,
Which threatens inundations deep and yellow !
Such difference doth a few months make. You’d think
Grief a rich field which never would lie fallow ;
No more it doth,—its ploughs but change their boys,
Who furrow some new soil to sow for joys.

VIII.

But coughs will come when sighs depart—and now
And then before sighs cease; for oft the one
Will bring the other, ere the lake-like brow
Is ruffled by a wrinkle, or the Sun
Of life reach ten o'clock: and while a glow,
Hectic and brief as summer's day nigh done,
O'erspreads the cheek which seems too pure for clay,
Thousands blaze, love, hope, die—how happy they!—

IX.

But Juan was not meant to die so soon.
We left him in the focus of such Glory
As may be won by favour of the Moon
Or ladies' fancies—rather transitory
Perhaps; but who would scorn the month of June,
Because December, with his breath so hoary,
Must come? Much rather should he court the ray,
To hoard up warmth against a wintry day.

X.

Besides, he had some qualities which fix

Middle-aged ladies even more than young :

The former know what's what ; while new-fledged chicks

Know little more of Love than what is sung

In rhymes, or dreamt (for Fancy will play tricks)

In visions of those skies from whence Love sprung.

Some reckon women by their Suns or Years,

I rather think the Moon should date the dears.

XI.

And why ? Because She's changeable and chaste.

I know no other reason, whatsoe'er

Suspicious people, who find fault in haste,

May choose to tax me with ; which is not fair,

Nor flattering to " their temper or their taste,"

As my friend Jeffery writes with such an air :

However, I forgive him, and I trust

He will forgive himself ;—if not, I must.

XII.

Old enemies who have become new friends

Should so continue—'tis a point of honour ;
And I know nothing which could make amends

For a return to hatred : I would shun her
Like garlic, howsoever she extends

Her hundred arms and legs, and fain outrun her.
Old flames, new wives, become our bitterest foes—
Converted foes should scorn to join with those.

XIII.

This were the worst desertion :—renegadoes,
Even shuffling Southey, that incarnate lie,
Would scarcely join again the "reformadoes,"⁽¹⁾

Whom he forsook to fill the Laureate's sty :
And honest men, from Iceland to Barbadoes,
Whether in Caledon or Italy,
Should not veer round with every breath, nor seize,
To pain, the moment when you cease to please.

XIV.

The lawyer and the critic but behold
The ~~baser~~ sides of literature and life,
And nought remains unseen, but much untold,
By those who scour those double vales of strife.
While common men grow ignorantly old,
The lawyer's brief is like the surgeon's knife,
Dissecting the whole inside of a question,
And with it all the process of digestion.

XV.

A legal broom's a moral chimney-sweeper,
And that's the reason he himself's so dirty :
The endless soot (²) bestows a tint far deeper
Than can be hid by altering his shirt ; he
Retains the sable stains of the dark creeper,
At least some twenty-nine do out of thirty,
In all their habits :—Not so *you*, I own ;
As Cæsar wore his robe you wear your gown.

XVI.

And all our little feuds, at least all *mine*,

Dear Jeffery, once my most redoubted foe,

(As far as rhyme and criticism combine

To make such puppets of us things below)

Are over. Here's a health to "Auld Lang Syne!"

I do not know you, and may never know

Your face,—but you have acted on the whole

Most nobly, and I own it from my soul.

XVII.

And when I use the phrase of "Auld Lang Syne!"

'Tis not addressed to you—the more's the pity

For me, for I would rather take my wine

With you, than aught (save Scott) in your proud city.

But somehow,—it may seem a schoolboy's whine,

And yet I seek not to be grand nor witty,—

But I am half a Scot by birth, and bred

A whole one, and my heart flies to my head,—

XVIII.

As "Auld Lang Syne" brings Scotland, one and all,
Scotch plaids, Scotch snoods, the blue hills, and
clear streams,
The Dee, the Don, Balgounie's Brig's *black wall*, (³)
All my boy feelings, all my gentler dreams
Of what I *then dreamt*, clothed in their own pall,
Like Banquo's offspring;—floating past me seems
My childhood in this childishness of mine:
I care not—'tis a glimpse of "Auld Lang Syne."

XIX.

And though, as you remember, in a fit
Of wrath and rhyme, when juvenile and curly,
I railed at Scots to shew my wrath and wit,
Which must be owned was sensitive and surly,
Yet 'tis in vain such sallies to permit,
They cannot quench young feelings fresh and early:
I "*scotched*, not killed," the Scotchman in my blood,
And love the land of "mountain and of flood."

XX.

Don Juan, who was real or ideal,—

For both are much the same, since what men think
Exists when the once thinkers are less real

Than what they thought, for mind can never sink,
And 'gainst the body makes a strong appeal;

And yet 'tis very puzzling on the brink
Of what is called Eternity, to stare,
And know no more of what is here than there:—

XXI.

Don Juan grew a very polished Russian—

How we won't mention, *why* we need not say:
Few youthful minds can stand the strong concussion

Of any slight temptation in their way:
But *his* just now were spread as is a cushion

Smoothed for a monarch's seat of honour: gay
Damsels, and dances, revels, ready money,
Made ice seem Paradise, and winter sunny.

XXII.

The favour of the Empress was agreeable ;
And though the duty waxed a little hard,
Young people at his time of life should be able
To come off handsomely in that regard.
He now was growing up like a green tree, able
For love, war, or ambition, which reward
Their luckier votaries, till old Age's tedium
Make some prefer the circulating medium.

XXIII.

About this time, as might have been anticipated,
Seduced by youth and dangerous examples,
Don Juan grew, I fear, a little dissipated ;
Which is a sad thing, and not only tramples
On our fresh feelings, but—as being participated
With all kinds of incorrigible samples
Of frail humanity—must make us selfish,
And shut our souls up in us like a shell-fish.

XXIV.

This we pass over. We will also pass

The usual progress of intrigues between
Unequal matches, such as are, alas !

A young Lieutenant's with a *not old* Queen,
But one who is not so youthful as she was

In all the royalty of sweet seventeen.
Sovereigns may sway materials, but not matter,
And wrinkles (the d—d democrats) won't flatter.

XXV.

And Death, the sovereign's Sovereign, though the great

Gracchus of all mortality, who levels
With his *Agrarian* laws, the high estate

Of him who feasts, and fights, and roars, and revels,
To one small grass-grown patch (which must await

Corruption for its crop) with the poor devils
Who never had a foot of land till now—

Death's a reformer, all men must allow.

XXVI.

He lived (not Death, but Juan) in a hurry
Of waste, and haste, and glare, and gloss, and glitter,
In this gay clime of bear-skins black and furry—
Which (though I hate to say a thing that's bitter)
Peep out sometimes, when things are in a flurry,
Through all the "purple and fine linen," fitter
For Babylon's than Russia's royal harlot—
And neutralize her outward show of Scarlet.

XXVII.

And this same state we won't describe: we could
Perhaps from hearsay, or from recollection;
But getting nigh grim Dante's "obscure wood,"
That horrid equinox, that hateful section
Of human years, that half-way house, that rude
Hut, whence wise travellers drive with circumspection
Life's sad post-horses o'er the dreary frontier
Of age, and looking back to youth, give *one* tear;—

XXVIII.

I won't describe—that is, if I can help
Description; and I won't reflect—that is,
If I can stave off thought, which, as a whelp
Clings to its teat, sticks to me through the abyss
Of this odd labyrinth; or as the kelp
Holds by the rock; or as a lover's kiss
Drains its first draught of lips:—but, as I said,
I *won't* philosophize, and *will* be read.

XXIX.

Juan, instead of courting courts, was courted,
A thing which happens rarely: this he owed
Much to his youth, and much to his reported
Valour; much also to the blood he showed,
Like a race-horse; much to each dress he sported,
Which set the beauty off in which he glowed,
As purple clouds befringe the sun; but most
He owed to an old woman and his post.

XXX.

He wrote to Spain :—and all his near relations,

Perceiving he was in a handsome way

Of getting on himself, and finding stations .

For cousins also, answered the same day.

Several prepared themselves for emigrations ;

And, eating ices, were o'erheard to say,

That with the addition of a slight pelisse,

Madrid's and Moscow's climes were of a-piece.

XXXI.

His Mother, Donna Inez, finding too

That in the lieu of drawing on his banker,

Where his assets were waxing rather few,

He had brought his spending to a handsome anchor,—

Replied, “ that she was glad to see him through

“ Those pleasures after which wild youth will hanker ;

“ As the sole sign of man's being in his senses

“ Is, learning to reduce his past expenses.

XXXII.

- “ She also recommended him to God,
“ And no less to God’s Son, as well as Mother;
“ Warned him against Greek-worship, which looks odd
“ In Catholic eyes; but told him too to smother
“ *Outward* dislike, which don’t look well abroad :
“ Informed him that he had a little brother
“ Born in a second wedlock; and above
“ All, praised the Empress’s *maternal* love.

XXXIII.

- “ She could not too much give her approbation
“ Unto an Empress, who preferred young men
“ Whose age, and, what was better still, whose nation
“ And climate, stopped all scandal (now and then):—
“ At home it might have given her some vexation;
“ But where thermometers sunk down to ten,
“ Or five, or one, or zero, she could never
“ Believe that virtue thawed before the river.”

XXXIV.

Oh for a *forty-parson-power* (⁴) to chaunt
Thy praise, Hypocrisy ! Oh for a hymn
Loud as the Virtues thou dost loudly vaunt,
Not practise ! Oh for trumps of cherubim !
Or the ear-trumpet of my good old aunt,
Who, through her spectacles at last grew dim,
Drew quiet consolation through its hint,
When she no more could read the pious print.

XXXV.

She was no hypocrite at least, poor soul,
But went to heaven in as sincere a way
As any body on the Elected Roll,
Which portions out upon the judgment day
Heaven's freeholds, in a sort of doomsday scroll,
Such as the conqueror William did repay
His knights with, lotting other's properties
Into some sixty thousand new knights' fees.

XXXVI.

I can't complain, whose ancestors are there,
Erneis, Radulphus—eight-and-forty manors
(If that my memory doth not greatly err)
Were their reward for following Billy's banners;
And though I can't help thinking 'twas scarce fair
To strip the Saxons of their *hydes*, (⁵) like tanners;
Yet as they founded churches with the produce,
You'll deem, no doubt, they put it to a good use.

XXXVII.

The gentle Juan flourished, though at times
He felt like other plants called Sensitive,
Which shrink from touch, as monarchs do from rhymes,
Save such as Southey can afford to give.
Perhaps he longed, in bitter frosts, for climes
In which the Neva's ice would cease to live
Before May-day: perhaps, despite his duty,
In royalty's vast arms he sighed for beauty:

XXXVIII.

Perhaps—but, sans perhaps, we need not seek

For causes young or old : the canker-worm
Will feed upon the fairest, freshest cheek,

As well as further drain the withered form :
Care, like a house-keeper, brings every week

His bills in, and however we may storm,
They must be paid : though six days smoothly run,
The seventh will bring blue devils or a dun.

XXXIX.

I don't know how it was, but he grew sick :

The Empress was alarmed, and her physician
(The same who physicked Peter) found the tick

Of his fierce pulse betoken a condition
Which augured of the dead, however *quick*

Itself, and showed a feverish disposition ;
At which the whole court was extremely troubled,
The Sovereign shocked, and all his medicines doubled.

XL.

Low were the whispers, manifold the rumours :

Some said he had been poisoned by Potemkin ;

Others talked learnedly of certain tumours,

Exhaustion, or disorders of the same kin ;

Some said 'twas a concoction of the humours,

Which with the blood too readily will claim kin ;

Others again were ready to maintain,

" 'Twas only the fatigue of last campaign."

XLI.

But here is one prescription out of many :

" Sodæ-Sulphat. 3. vi. 3. s. Mannæ optim.

" Aq. fervent. F. 3. ifs. 3ij. tinct. Sennæ

" Haustus." (And here the surgeon came and cupped
him)

" R. Pulv. Com. gr. iii. Ipecacuanhæ"

(With more beside, if Juan had not stopped 'em.)

" Bolus Potassæ Sulphuret. sumendus,

" Et Haustus ter in die capiendus."

XLII.

This is the way physicians mend or end us,
 Secundum artem : but although we sneer
In health—when ill, we call them to attend us,
 Without the least propensity to jeer :
While that “*hiatus maxime deflendus*,”
 To be filled up by spade or mattock, 's near,
Instead of gliding graciously down Lethe,
We téase mild Baillie, or soft Abernethy.

XLIII.

Juan demurred at this first notice to
 Quit ; and though Death had threatened an ejection,
His youth and constitution bore him through,
 And sent the doctors in a new direction.
But still his state was delicate : the hue
 Of health but flickered with a faint reflection
Along his wasted cheek, and seemed to gravel
The Faculty—who said that he must travel.

XLIV.

The climate was too cold they said for him,
Meridian-born, to bloom in. This opinion
Made the chaste Catherine look a little grim,
Who did not like at first to lose her minion -
But when she saw his dazzling eye wax dim,
And drooping like an eagle's with clipt pinion,
She then resolved to send him on a mission,
But in a style becoming his condition.

XLV.

There was just then a kind of a discussion,
A sort of treaty or negociation
Between the British cabinet and Russian,
Maintained with all the due prevarication
With which great states such things are apt to push on;
Something about the Baltic's navigation,
Hides, train-oil, tallow, and the rights of Thetis,
Which Britons deem their "uti possidetis."

XLVI.

So Catherine, who had a handsome way
Of fitting out her favourites, conferred
This secret charge on Juan, to display
At once her royal splendour, and reward
His services. He kissed hands the next day,
Received instructions how to play his card,
Was laden with all kinds of gifts and honours,
Which showed what great discernment was the donor's.

XLVII.

But she was lucky, and luck's all. Your Queens
Are generally prosperous in reigning ;
Which puzzles us to know what Fortune means.
But to continue : though her years were waning,
Her climacteric teased her like her teens ;
And though her dignity brooked no complaining,
So much did Juan's setting off distress her,
She could not find at first a fit successor.

XLVIII.

But Time the comforter will come at last ;

And four-and-twenty hours, and twice that number
Of candidates requesting to be placed,

Made Catherine taste next night a quiet slumber :—
Not that she meant to fix again in haste,

Nor did she find the quantity encumber,
But always choosing with deliberation,
Kept the place open for their emulation.

XLIX.

While this high post of honour's in abeyance,

For one or two days, reader, we request
You'll mount with our young hero the conveyance

Which wafted him from Petersburg : the best
Barouche, which had the glory to display once
The fair Czarina's Autocratic crest,

(When, a new Iphigene, she went to Tauris)

Was given to her favourite, (⁶) and now *bore his*.

L.

A bull-dog, and a bull-finch, and an ermine,

All private favourites of Don Juan ; for

(Let deeper sages the true cause determine)

He had a kind of inclination, or

Weakness, for what most people deem mere vermin—

Live animals: an old maid of threescore

For cats and birds more penchant ne'er displayed,

Although he was not old, nor even a maid ;—

Ld.

The animals aforesaid occupied

Their station : there were valets, secretaries,

In other vehicles ; but at his side

Sat little Leila, who survived the parries

He made 'gainst Cossaque sabres, in the wide

Slaughter of Ismail. Though my wild Muse varies

Her note, she don't forget the infant girl

Whom he preserved—a pure and living pearl.

LII.

Poor little thing! She was as fair as docile,

And with that gentle, serious character,

As rare in living beings as a fossile

Man, 'midst thy mouldy Mammoths, "grand Cuvier!"

Ill fitted with her ignorance to jostle

With this o'erwhelming world, where all must err:

But she was yet but ten years old, and therefore

Was tranquil, though she knew not why or wherefore.

LIII.

Don Juan loved her, and she loved him, as

Nor brother, father, sister, daughter love.

I cannot tell exactly what it was;

He was not yet quite old enough to prove

Parental feelings, and the other class,

Called brotherly affection could not move

His bosom,—for he never had a sister:

Ah! if he had, how much he would have missed her!

LIV.

And still less was it sensual ; for besides
That he was not an ancient debauchee,
(Who like sour fruit, to stir their veins' salt tides,
As Acids rouse a dormant Alkali)
Although (*'twill* happen as our planet guides)
His youth was not the chastest that might be,
There was the purest platonism at bottom
Of all his feelings—only he forgot 'em.

LV.

Just now there was no peril of temptation ;
He loved the infant orphan he had saved,
As Patriots (now and then) may love a nation ;
His pride too felt that she was not enslaved,
Owing to him ;—as also her salvation
Through his means and the church's might be paved.
But one thing's odd, which here must be inserted,
The little Turk refused to be converted.

LVI.

'Twas strange enough she should retain the impression
Thro' such a scene of change, and dread, and slaughter;
But though three bishops told her the transgression,
She showed a great dislike to holy water:
She also had no passion for confession;
Perhaps she had nothing to confess :—no matter;
Whate'er the cause, the church made little of it—
She still held out that Mahomet was a prophet.

LVII.

In fact, the only Christian she could bear
Was Juan, whom she seemed to have selected
In place of what her home and friends once *were*.
He *naturally* loved what he protected;
And thus they formed a rather curious pair;
A guardian green in years, a ward connected
In neither clime, time, blood, with her defender;
And yet this want of ties made their's more tender.

LVIII.

They journeyed on through Poland and through Warsaw,
Famous for mines of salt and yokes of iron:
Through Courland also, which that famous farce saw
Which gave her dukes the graceless name of 'Biron.' (?)
'Tis the same landscape which the modern Mars saw
Who marched to Moscow, led by Fame, the Syren!
To lose by one month's frost some twenty years
Of conquest, and his guard of grenadiers.

LIX.

Let not this seem an anti-climax :—" Oh!
" My Guard ! my Old Guard !" exclaimed that God
of Clay.—
Think of the Thunderer's falling down below
Carotid-artery-cutting Castlereagh !—
Alas ! that glory should be chilled by snow !
But should we wish to warm us on our way
Through Poland, there is Kosciusko's name
Might scatter fire through ice, like Hecla's flame.

LX.

From Poland they came on through Prussia Proper,
And Koningsberg the capital, whose vaunt,
Besides some veins of iron, lead, or copper,
Has lately been the great Professor Kant.
Juan, who cared not a tobacco-stopper
About philosophy, pursued his jaunt
To Germany, whose somewhat tardy millions
Have princes who spur more than their postillions.

LXI.

And thence through Berlin, Dresden, and the like,
Until he reached the castellated Rhine:—
Ye glorious Gothic scenes! how much ye strike
All phantasies, not even excepting mine:
A grey wall, a green ruin, rusty pike,
Make my soul pass the equinoctial line
Between the present and past worlds; and hover
Upon their airy confine, half-seas-over.

LXII.

But Juan posted on through Manheim, Bonn,
Which Drachenfels frowns over like a spectre
Of the good feudal times for ever gone,
On which I have not time just now to lecture.
From thence he was drawn onwards to Cologne,
A city which presents to the inspector
Eleven thousand Maidenheads of bone,
The greatest number Flesh hath ever known. (8)

LXIII.

From thence to Holland's Hague and Helvoetsluys,
That water land of Dutchmen and of ditches,
Where juniper expresses its best juice,
The poor man's sparkling substitute for riches.
Senates and sages have condemned its use—
But to deny the mob a cordial which is
Too often all the clothing, meat, or fuel
Good government has left them, seems but cruel.

LXIV.

Here he embarked, and with a flowing sail
Went bounding for the island of the free,
Towards which the impatient wind blew half a gale :
High dashed the spray, the bows dipped in the sea,
And sea-sick passengers turned somewhat pale ;
But Juan, seasoned as he well might be
By former voyages, stood to watch the skiffs
Which passed, or catch the first glimpse of the cliffs.

LXV.

At length they rose, like a white wall along
The blue sea's border ; and Don Juan felt—
What even young strangers feel a little strong
At the first sight of Albion's chalky belt—
A kind of pride that he should be among
Those haughty shop-keepers, who sternly dealt
Their goods and edicts out from pole to pole,
And made the very billows pay them toll.

LXVI.

I have no great cause to love that spot of earth,
Which holds what *might have been* the noblest nation ;
But though I owe it little but my birth,
I feel a mixed regret and veneration
For its decaying fame and former worth.
Seven years (the usual term of transportation)
Of absence lay one's old resentments level,
When a man's country's going to the devil.

LXVII.

Alas ! could She but fully, truly, know
How her great name is now throughout abhorred ;
How eager all the earth is for the blow
Which shall lay bare her bosom to the sword ;
How all the nations deem her their worst foe,
That worse than *worst of foes*, the once adored
False friend, who held out freedom to mankind,
And now would chain them, to the very mind ;—

LXVIII.

Would she be proud, or boast herself the free,

Who is but first of slaves? The nations are
In prison,—but the jailor, what is he?

No less a victim to the bolt and bar.
Is the poor privilege to turn the key
Upon the captive, freedom? He's as far
From the enjoyment of the earth and air
Who watches o'er the chain, as they who wear.

LXIX.

Don Juan now saw Albion's earliest beauties,—
Thy cliffs, *dear* Dover! harbour, and hotel;
Thy custom-house, with all its delicate duties;
Thy waiters running mucks at every bell;
Thy packets, all whose passengers are booties
To those who upon land or water dwell;
And last, not least, to strangers uninstructed,
Thy long, long bills, whence nothing is deducted.

LXX.

Juan, though careless, young, and magnifique,
And rich in rubles, diamonds, cash, and credit,
Who did not limit much his bills per week,
Yet stared at this a little, though he paid it,—
(His Maggior Duomo, a smart, subtle Greek,
Before him summed the awful scroll and read it :)
But doubtless as the air, though seldom sunny,
Is free, the respiration's worth the money.

LXXI.

On with the horses ! Off to Canterbury !
Tramp, tramp, o'er pebble, and splash, splash, thro'
puddle ;
Hurrah ! how swiftly speeds the post so merry !
Not like slow Germany, wherein they muddle
Along the road, as if they went to bury
Their fare ; and also pause besides, to fuddle
With "schnapps"—sad dogs ! whom "Hundsot" or
"Ferflucter"
Affect no more than lightning a conductor.

LXXII.

Now there is nothing gives a man such spirits,
Leavening his blood as Cayenne doth a curry,
As going at full speed—no matter where its
Direction be, so 'tis but in a hurry,
And merely for the sake of its own merits :
For the less cause there is for all this flurry,
The greater is the pleasure in arriving
At the great *end* of travel—which is driving.

LXXIII.

They saw at Canterbury the Cathedral ;
Black Edward's helm, and Becket's bloody stone,
Were pointed out as usual by the Bedral,
In the same quaint, uninterested tone :—
There's Glory again for you, gentle reader ! All
Ends in a rusty casque, and dubious bone,
Half-solved into those sodas or magnesias,
Which form that bitter draught, the human species.

LXXIV.

The effect on Juan was of course sublime :

He breathed a thousand Cressys, as he saw
The casque, which never stooped, except to Time.
Even the bold Churchman's tomb excited awe,
Who died in the then great attempt to climb
O'er kings, who *now* at least *must talk* of law,
Before they butcher. Little Leila gazed,
And asked why such a structure had been raised :

LXXV.

And being told it was "God's house," she said

He was well lodged, but only wondered how
He suffered Infidels in his homestead,

The cruel Nazarenes, who had laid low
His holy temples in the lands which bred

The True Believers ;—and her infant brow
Was bent with grief that Mahomet should resign
A mosque so noble, flung like pearls to swine.

LXXVI.

On, on ! through meadows, managed like a garden,

A Paradise of hops and high production :

For after years of travel by a Bard in

Countries of greater heat but lesser suction,

A green field is a sight which makes him pardon

The absence of that more sublime construction,

Which mixes up vines, olives, precipices,

Glaciers, volcanos, oranges, and ices.

LXXVII.

And when I think upon a pot of beer——

But I won't weep !—and so drive on, postillions !

As the smart boys spurred fast in their career,

Juan admired these highways of free millions ;

A country in all senses the most dear

To foreigner or native, save some silly ones,

Who “ kick against the pricks ” just at this juncture,

And for their pains get only a fresh puncture.

LXXVIII.

What a delightful thing's a turnpike road !

So smooth, so level, such a mode of shaving

The earth, as scarce the eagle in the broad

Air can accomplish, with his wide wings waving.

Had such been cut in Phaeton's time, the God

Had told his son to satisfy his craving

With the York mail;—but onward as we roll,

“Surgit amari aliquid”—the toll !

LXXIX.

Alas ! how deeply painful is all payment !

Take lives, take wives, take aught except men's purses.

As Machiavel shows those in purple raiment,

Such is the shortest way to general curses.

They hate a murderer much less than a claimant

On that sweet ore which every body nurses :—

Kill a man's family, and he may brook it,

But keep your hands out of his breeches' pocket.

LXXX.

So said the Florentine : ye Monarchs, hearken
To your instructor. Juan now was borne,
Just as the day began to wane and darken,
O'er the high hill which looks with pride or scorn
Toward the great city :—ye who have a spark in
Your veins of Cockney spirit, smile or mourn,
According as you take things well or ill—
Bold Britons, we are now on Shooter's Hill !

LXXXI.

The sun went down, the smoke rose up, as from
A half-unquenched volcano, o'er a space
Which well beseemed the " Devil's drawing-room,"
As some have qualified that wondrous place.
But Juan felt, though not approaching *home*,
As one who, though he were not of the race,
Revered the soil, of those true sons the mother,
Who butchered half the earth, and bullied t' other. (9)

LXXXII.

A mighty mass of brick, and smoke, and shipping,
 Dirty and dusky, but as wide as eye
Could reach, with here and there a sail just skipping
 In sight, then lost amidst the forestry
Of masts ; a wilderness of steeples peeping
 On tiptoe, through their sea-coal canopy ;
A huge, dun cupola, like a foolscap crown
On a fool's head—and there is London Town !

LXXXIII.

But Juan saw not this : each wreath of smoke
 Appeared to him but as the magic vapour
Of some alchymic furnace ; from whence broke
 The wealth of worlds (a wealth of tax and paper :)
The gloomy clouds, which o'er it as a yoke
 Are bowed, and put the sun out like a taper,
Were nothing but the natural atmosphere,
Extremely wholesome, though but rarely clear.

LXXXIV.

He paused—and so will I; as doth a crew

Before they give their broadside. By and bye,
My gentle countrymen, we will renew

Our old acquaintance : and at least I'll try
To tell you truths *you* will not take as true,

Because they are so :—a male Mrs. Fry,
With a soft besom will I sweep your halls,
And brush a web or two from off the walls.

LXXXV.

Oh, Mrs. Fry ! Why go to Newgate ? Why

Preach to poor rogues ? And wherefore not begin
With C—lt—n, or with other houses ? Try

Your hand at hardened and imperial sin.
To mend the people's an' absurdity,

A jargon, a mere philanthropic din,
Unless you make their betters better :—Fie !
I thought you had more religion, Mrs. Fry.

LXXXVI.

Teach them the decencies of good threescore ;
Cure them of tours, Hussar and Highland dresses ;
Tell them that youth once gone returns no more ;
That hired huzzas redeem no land's distresses ;
Tell them Sir W—ll—m C—t—s is a bore,
Too dull even for the dullest of excesses—
The witless Falstaff of a hoary Hal,
A fool whose bells have ceased to ring at all ;—

LXXXVII.

Tell them, though it may be perhaps too late
On life's worn confine, jaded, bloated, satel,
To set up vain pretences of being great,
'Tis not so to be good ; and be it stated,
The worthiest kings have ever loved least state ;
And tell them——but you won't, and I have prated
Just now enough ; but by and bye I'll prattle
Like Roland's horn in Roncesvalles' battle.

END OF CANTO THE TENTH.

NOTES TO CANTO X.

Note 1, page 59, stanza xiii.

Would scarcely join again the "reformadoes."

"Reformers," or rather "Reformed." The Baron Bradwardine, in *Waverley*, is authority for the word.

Note 2, page 60, stanza xv.

*The endless soot bestows a tint far deeper
Than can be hid by altering his shirt.*

Query, *suit*?—PRINTER'S DEVIL.

Note 3, page 62, stanza xviii.

Balgounie's Brig's "black wall."

The brig of Dón near the "auld toun" of Aberdeen, with its one arch and its black deep salmon stream below, is in my memory as yesterday. I still remember, though perhaps I may misquote, the awful proverb which made me pause to cross it, and yet lean over it with a childish delight, being an only son, at least by the mother's side. The saying as

recollected by me was this, but I have never heard or seen it since I was nine years of age:—

“ Brig of Balgounie, *black's* your *sea*,
 “ Wi' a wife's *as son*, and a mear's *as foal*,
 “ Doun ye shall fa' !”

Note 4, page 70, stanza xxxiv.

*Oh, for a “ forty-parson-power” to chaunt
 Thy praise, Hypocrisy !*

A metaphor taken from the “ forty-horse-power” of a steam-engine. That mad wag, the Reverend S. S. sitting by a brother Clergyman at dinner, observed afterwards that his dull neighbour had a “ *twelve-parson-power*” of conversation.

Note 5, page 71, stanza xxxvi.

To strip the Saxons of their hydes, like tanners.

“ Hyde.”—I believe a hyde of land to be a legitimate word, and as such subject to the tax of a quibble.

Note 6, page 77, stanza xlix.

Was given to her favourite, and now bore his.

The Empress went to the Crimea, accompanied by the Emperor Joseph, in the year—I forget which.

Note 7, page 82, stanza lviii.

Which gave her dukes the graceless name of “ Biron.”

In the Empress Anne's time, Biron her favourite assumed

the name and arms of the "Birons" of France, which families are yet extant with that of England. There are still the daughters of Courland of that name; one of them I remember seeing in England in the blessed year of the Allies—(the Dutchess of S.)—to whom the English Duchess of S——t presented me as a namesake.

Note 8, page 84, stanza lxii.

*Eleven thousand maidenheads of bone,
The greatest number Flesh hath ever known.*

St. Ursula and her eleven thousand virgins were still extant in 1816, and may be so yet, as much as ever.

Note 9, page 93, stanza lxxxi.

Who butchered half the earth and bullied t'other.

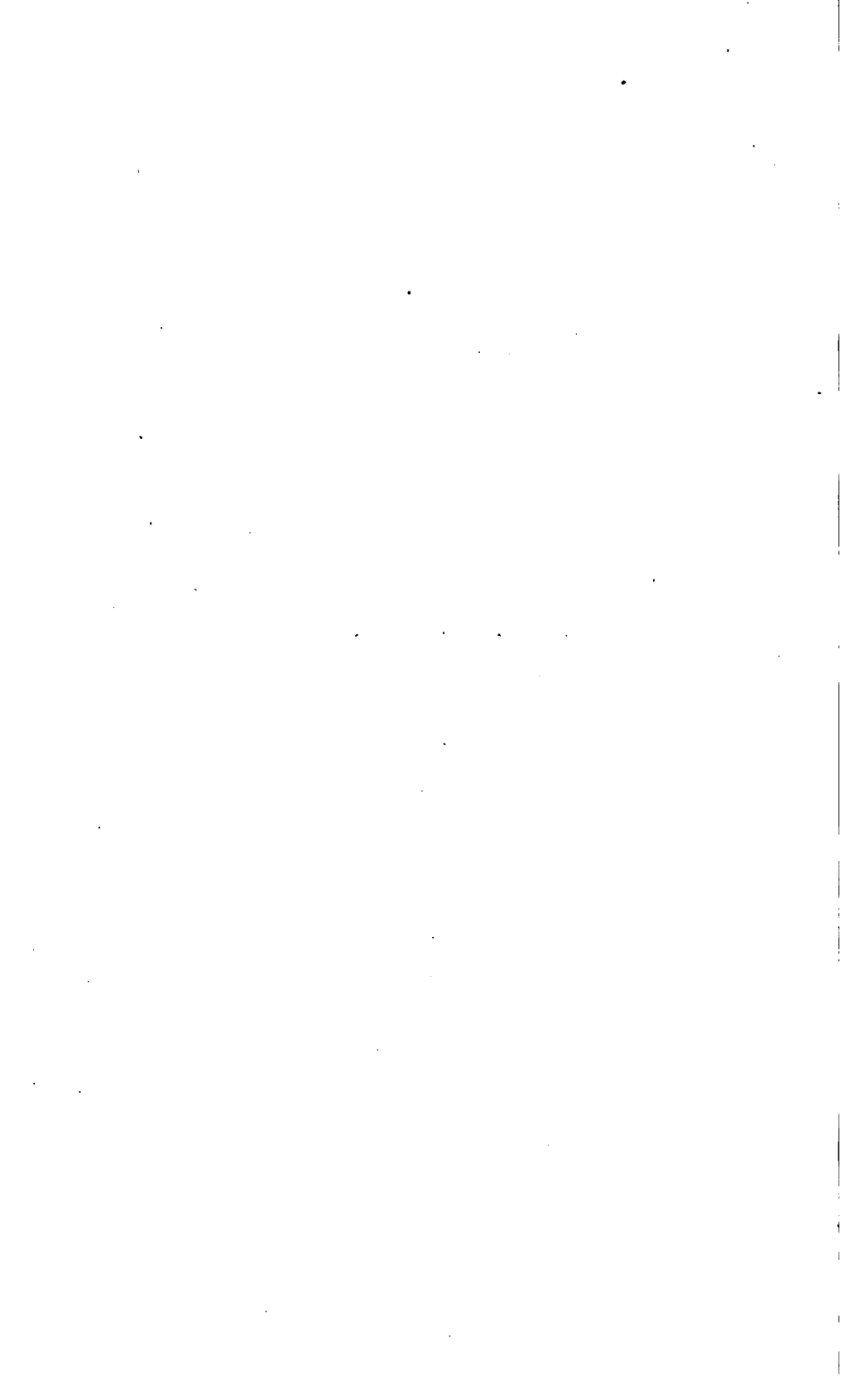
India. America.





DON JUAN.

CANTO XI.



DON JUAN.

CANTO XI.

I.

WHEN Bishop Berkeley said "there was no matter,"

And proved it—'twas no matter what he said :

They say his system 'tis in vain to batter,

Too subtle for the airiest human head ;

And yet who can believe it! I would shatter

Gladly all matters, down to stone or lead,

Or adamant, to find the World a spirit,

And wear my head, denying that I wear it.

II.

What a sublime discovery 'twas to make the
Universe universal Egotism !
That all's ideal—*all ourselves* : I'll stake the
World (be it what you will) that *that's* no Schism.
Oh, Doubt!—if thou be'st Doubt, for which some take
thee,
But which I doubt extremely—thou sole prism
Of the Truth's rays, spoil not my draught of spirit !
Heaven's brandy,—though our brain can hardly bear it.

III.

For ever and anon comes Indigestion,
(Not the most “dainty Ariel”) and perplexes
Our soarings with another sort of question :
And that which after all my spirit vexes,
Is, that I find no spot where man can rest eye on,
Without confusion of the sorts and sexes,
Of being, stars, and this unriddled wonder,
The World, which at the worst's a glorious blunder—

IV.

• If it be Chance ; or if it be according
To the Old Text, still better :—lest it should
Turn out so, we'll say nothing 'gainst the wording,
As several people think such hazards rude :
They're right ; our days are too brief for affording
Space to dispute what *no one* ever could
Decide, and *every body one day* will
Know very clearly—or at least lie still.

V.

And therefore will I leave off metaphysical
Discussion, which is neither here nor there :
If I agree that what is, is ; then this I call
Being quite perspicuous and extremely fair.
The truth is, I've grown lately rather phthisical :
I don't know what the reason is—the air
Perhaps ; but as I suffer from the shocks
Of illness, I grow much more orthodox.

VI.

The first attack at once proved the Divinity ;
 (But *that* I never doubted, nor the Devil ;)
The next, the Virgin's mystical virginity ;
 The third, the usual Origin of Evil ;
The fourth at once established the whole Trinity
 On so uncontrovertible a level,
That I devoutly wished the three were four,
On purpose to believe so much the more.

VII.

To our theme :—The man who has stood on the Acropolis,
 And looked down over Attica ; or he
Who has sailed where picturesque Constantinople is,
 Or seen Tombuctoo, or hath taken tea
In small-eyed China's crockery-ware metropolis,
 Or sat amidst the bricks of Nineveh,
May not think much of London's first appearance—
But ask him what he thinks of it a year hence ?

VIII.

Don Juan had got out on Shooter's Hill ;

Sunset the time, the place the same declivity

Which looks along that vale of good and ill

Where London streets ferment in full activity ;

While every thing around was calm and still,

Except the creak of wheels, which on their pivot he

Heard,—and that bee-like, bubbling, busy hum

Of cities, that boils over with their scum :—

IX.

I say, Don Juan, wrapt in contemplation,

Walked on behind his carriage, o'er the summit,

And lost in wonder of so great a nation,

Gave way to't, since he could not overcome it.

“ And here,” he cried, “ is Freedom's chosen station ;

“ Here peals the people's voice, nor can entomb it

“ Racks, prisons, inquisitions ; resurrection

“ Awaits it, each new meeting or election.

X.

“ Here are chaste wives, pure lives ; here people pay
“ But what they please ; and if that things be dear,
“ ’Tis only that they love to throw away
“ Their cash, to show how much they have a-year.
“ Here laws are all inviolate ; none lay
“ Traps for the traveller ; every highway’s clear :
“ Here”——he was interrupted by a knife,
With, “ Damn your eyes ! your money or your life !”

XI.

These freeborn sounds proceeded from four pads,
In ambush laid, who had perceived him loiter
Behind his carriage ; and, like handy lads,
Had seized the lucky hour to reconnoitre,
In which the heedless gentleman who gads
Upon the road, unless he prove a fighter,
May find himself within that Isle of riches
Exposed to lose his life as well as breeches.

XII.

Juan, who did not understand a word

Of English, save their shibboleth, "God damn!"

And even that he had so rarely heard,

He sometimes thought 'twas only their "Salām,"

Or "God be with you!"—and 'tis not absurd

To think so; for half English as I am

(To my misfortune) never can I say

I heard them wish "God with you," save that way;—

XIII.

Juan yet quickly understood their gesture,

And being somewhat choleric and sudden,

Drew forth a pocket-pistol from his vesture,

And fired it into one assailant's pudding—

Who fell, as rolls an ox o'er in his pasture,

And roared out, as he writhed his native mud in,

Unto his nearest follower or henchman,

"Oh Jack! I'm floored by that ere bloody Frenchman!"

XIV.

On which Jack and his train set off at speed,

And Juan's suite, late scattered at a distance,

Came up, all marvelling at such a deed,

And offering, as usual, late assistance.

Juan, who saw the Moon's late minion bleed

As if his veins would pour out his existence,

Stood calling out for bandages and lint,

And wished he had been less hasty with his flint.

XV.

"Perhaps," thought he, "it is the country's Wont

"To welcome foreigners in this way: now

"I recollect some innkeepers who don't

"Differ, except in robbing with a bow,

"In lieu of a bare blade and brazen front.

"But what is to be done? I can't allow

"The fellow to lie groaning on the road:

"So take him up; I'll help you with the load."

XVI.

But ere they could perform this pious duty,

The dying man cried, "Hold! I've got my gruel!

"Oh! for a glass of *max*! We've miss'd our booty—

"Let me die where I am!" And as the fuel

Of life shrunk in his heart, and thick and sooty

The drops fell from his death-wound, and he drew ill

His breath,—he from his swelling throat untied

A kerchief, crying "Give Sal that!"—and died.

XVII.

The cravat stained with bloody drops fell down

Before Don Juan's feet: he could not tell

Exactly why it was before him, thrown,

Nor what the meaning of the man's farewell.

Poor Tom was once a kiddy upon town,

A thorough varmint, and a *real* swell;

Full flash, all fancy, until fairly diddled,

His pockets first, and then his body riddled.

XVIII.

Don Juan, having done the best he could

In all the circumstances of the case,

As soon as "Crowner's 'quest" allowed, pursued

His travels to the capital apace ;—

Esteeming it a little hard he should

In twelve hours' time, and very little space,

Have been obliged to slay a freeborn native

In self-defence :—this made him meditative.

XIX.

He from the world had cut off a great man,

Who in his time had made heroic bustle.

Who in a row like Tom could lead the van,

Booze in the ken, or at the spellken hustle ?

Who queer a flat ? Who (spite of Bow-street's ban)

On the high toby-spice so flash the muzzle ?

Who on a lark, with black-eyed Sal (his blowing)

So prime, so swell, so nutty, and so knowing ? (¹)

XX.

But Tom's no more—and so no more of Tom.

Heroes must die ; and by God's blessing 'tis
Not long before the most of them go home.—

Hail ! Themis, hail ! Upon thy verge it is
That Juan's chariot, rolling like a drum

In thunder, holds the way it can't well miss,
Through Kennington and all the other “ tons,”
Which make us wish ourselves in town at once;—

XXI.

Through Groves, so called as being void of trees,
(Like *lucus* from *no* light) ; through prospects named
Mounts Pleasant, as containing nought to please,
Nor much to climb ; through little boxes framed
Of bricks, to let the dust in at your ease,
With “ To be let,” upon their doors proclaimed ;
Through “ Rows” most modestly called “ Paradise,”
Which Eve might quit without much sacrifice;—

XXII.

Through coaches, drays, choked turnpikes, and a whirl
Of wheels, and roar of voices and confusion ;
Here taverns wooing to a pint of " purl,"
There mails fast flying off like a delusion ;
There barber's blocks with perriwigs in curl
In windows ; here the lamplighter's infusion
Slowly distilled into the glimmering glass,
(For in those days we had not got to gas :)—

XXIII.

Through this, and much, and more, is the approach
Of travellers to mighty Babylon :
Whether they come by horse, or chaise, or coach,
With slight exceptions, all the ways seem one.
I could say more, but do not choose to encroach
Upon the guide-book's privilege. The Sun
Had set some time, and night was on the ridge
Of twilight, as the party crossed the bridge.

XXIV.

That's rather fine, the gentle sound of 'Thamis—

Who vindicates a moment too his stream—

Though hardly heard through multifarious "damme's."

The lamps of Westminster's more regular gleam,

The breadth of pavement, and yon shrine where Fame is

A spectral resident—whose pallid beam

In shape of moonshine hovers o'er the pile—

Make this a sacred part of Albion's Isle.

XXV.

The Druid's groves are gone—so much the better:

Stone-Henge is not—but what the devil is it?—

But Bedlam still exists with its sage fetter,

That madmen may not bite you on a visit;

The Bench too seats or suits full many a debtor;

The Mansion House too (though some people quiz it)

To me appears a stiff yet grand erection;

But then the Abbey's worth the whole collection.

XXVI.

The line of lights too up to Charing Cross,
Pall Mall, and so forth, have a coruscation
Like gold as in comparison to dross,
Matched with the Continent's illumination,
Whose cities Night by no means deigns to gloss :
The French were not yet a lamp-lighting nation,
And when they grew so—on their new-found lanthorn,
Instead of wicks, they made a wicked man turn.

XXVII.

A row of gentlemen along the streets
Suspended, may illuminate mankind,
As also bonfires made of country seats ;
But the old way is best for the purblind :
The other looks like phosphorus on sheets,
A sort of Ignis-fatuus to the mind,
Which, though 'tis certain to perplex and frighten,
Must burn more mildly ere it can enlighten.

XXVIII.

But London's so well lit, that if Diogenes
 Could recommence to hunt his *honest man*,
And found him not amidst the various progenies
 Of this enormous city's spreading spawn,
'Twere not for want of lamps to aid his dodging his
 Yet undiscovered treasure. What *I* can,
I've done to find the same throughout life's journey,
But see the world is only one attorney.

XXIX.

Over the stones still rattling, up Pall Mall,
 Through crowds and carriages, but waxing thinner
As thundered knockers broke the long-sealed spell
 Of doors 'gainst duns, and to an early dinner
Admitted a small party as night fell,—
 Don Juan, our young diplomatic sinner,
Pursued his path, and drove past some Hotels,
St. James's Palace, and St. James's "Hells." (²)

XXX.

They reached the hotel: forth streamed from the front door
A tide of well-clad waiters, and around
The mob stood, and as usual, several score
Of those pedestrian Paphians, who abound
In decent London when the daylight's o'er;
Commodious but immoral, they are found
Useful, like Malthus, in promoting marriage:—
But Juan now is stepping from his carriage

XXXI.

Into one of the sweetest of hotels,
Especially for foreigners—and mostly
For these whom favour or whom fortune swells,
And cannot find a bill's small items costly.
There many an envoy either dwelt or dwells,
(The den of many a diplomatic lost lie)
Until to some conspicuous square they pass,
And blazon o'er the door their names in brass.

XXXII.

Juan, whose was a delicate commission,

Private, though publicly important, bore.

No title to point out with due precision

The exact affair on which he was sent o'er.

'Twas merely known that on a secret mission

A foreigner of rank had graced our shore,

Young, handsome; and accomplished; who was said

(In whispers) to have turned his Sovereign's head.

XXXIII.

Some rumour also of some strange adventures

Had gone before him, and his wars and loves ;

And as romantic heads are pretty painters,

And, above all, an Englishwoman's roves

Into the excursive, breaking the indentures

Of sober reason, wheresoe'er it moves,

He found himself extremely in the fashion,

Which serves our thinking people for a passion.

XXXIV.

I don't mean that they are passionless, but quite
The contrary ; but then 'tis in the head ;
Yet as the consequences are as bright
As if they acted with the heart instead,
What after all can signify the site
Of ladies' lucubrations ? So they lead
In safety to the place for which you start,
What matters if the road be head or heart ?

XXXV.

Juan presented in the proper place,
To proper placemen, every Russ credential ;
And was received with all the due grimace,
By those who govern in the mood potential ;
Who, seeing a handsome stripling with smooth face,
Thought (what in state affairs is most essential)
That they as easily might *do* the youngster,
As hawks may pounce upon a woodland songster.

XXXVI.

They erred, as aged men will do; but by
And by we'll talk of that; and if we don't,
'Twill be because our notion is not high
Of politicians and their double front,
Who live by lies, yet dare not boldly lie:
Now what I love in women is, they won't
Or can't do otherwise than lie, but do it
So well, the very truth seems falsehood to it.

XXXVII.

And, after all, what is a lie? 'Tis but
The truth in masquerade; and I defy
Historians, heroes, lawyers, priests to put
A fact without some leaven of a lie.
The very shadow of true Truth would shut
Up annals, revelations, poesy,
And prophecy—except it should be dated
Some years before the incidents related.

XXXVIII.

Praised be all liars and all lies! Who now

Can tax my mild Muse with misanthropy?

She rings the world's "Te Deum," and her brow

Blushes for those who will not:—but to sigh

Is idle; let us like most others bow,

Kiss hands, feet, any part of Majesty,

After the good example of "Green Erin,"

Whose Shamrock now seems rather worse for wearing.

XXXIX.

Don Juan was presented, and his dress

And mien excited general admiration—

I don't know which was most admired or less:

One monstrous diamond drew much observation,

Which Catherine in a moment of "ivresse"

(In love or brandy's fervent fermentation)

Bestowed upon him, as the public learned;

And, to say truth, it had been fairly earned.

XL.

Besides the Ministers and underlings,
Who must be courteous to the accredited
Diplomatists of rather wavering kings,
Until their royal riddle's fully read,
The very clerks,—those somewhat dirty springs
Of office, or the House of Office, fed
By foul corruption into streams,—even they
Were hardly rude enough to earn their pay.

XLI.

And insolence no doubt is what they are
Employed for, since it is their daily labour,
In the dear offices of peace or war;
And should you doubt, pray ask of your next neighbour,
When for a passport, or some other bar
To freedom, he applied (a grief and a bore)
If he found not this spawn of tax-born riches,
Like lap-dogs, the least civil sons of b——s.

XLII.

But Juan was received with much "empressement :"—

These phrases of refinement I must borrow
From our next neighbour's land, where, like a chessman,
There is a move set down for joy or sorrow
Not only in mere talking, but the press. Man
In islands is, it seems, downright and thorough,
More than on continents—as if the sea
(See Billingsgate) made even the tongue more free.

XLIII.

And yet the British "Damme's" rather Attic :

Your Continental oaths are but incontinent,
And turn on things which no Aristocratic
Spirit would name, and therefore even I won't anent⁽⁸⁾
This subject quote ; as it would be schismatic
In politesse, and have a sound affronting in't :—
But "Damme's" quite ethereal, though too daring—
Platonic blasphemy, the soul of swearing.

XLIV.

For downright rudeness, ye may stay at home;

For true or false politeness (and scarce *that*
Now) you may cross the blue deep and white foam—

The first the emblem (rarely though) of what
You leave behind—the next of much you come

To meet. However, 'tis no time to chat
On general topics : poems must confine
Themselves to Unity, like this of mine.

XLV.

In the Great World,—which being interpreted:

Meaneth the West or worst end of a city,
And about twice two thousand people bred

By no means to be very wise or witty,
But to sit up while others lie in bed,

And look down on the universe with pity,—
Juan, as an inveterate Patrician,
Was well received by persons of condition.

XLVI.

He was a bachelor, which is a matter
Of import both to Virgin and to Bride ;
The former's hymeneal hopes to flatter ;
And (should she not hold fast by love or pride)
'Tis also of some moment to the latter :
A rib's a thorn in a wed Gallant's side,
Requires decorum, and is apt to double
The horrid sin—and what's still worse, the trouble.

XLVII.

But Juan was a bachelor—of arts,
And parts, and hearts : he danced and sung, and had
An air as sentimental as Mozart's
Softest of melodies ; and could be sad
Or cheerful, without any “ flaws or starts,”
Just at the proper time ; and though a lad,
Had seen the world—which is a curious sight,
And very much unlike what people write.

XLVIII.

Fair virgins blushed upon him ; wedded dames
 Bloomed also in less transitory hues ;
For both commodities dwell by the Thames,
 The painting and the painted ; youth, ceruse,
Against his heart preferred their usual claims,
 Such as no gentleman can quite refusé ;
Daughters admired his dress, and pious mothers
Enquired his income, and if he had brothers.

XLIX.

The milliners who furnish " drapery Misses" ⁽⁴⁾
 Throughout the season, upon speculation
Of payment ere the honeymoon's last kisses
 Have waned into a crescent's coruscation,
Thought such an opportunity as this is,
 Of a rich foreigner's initiation,
Not to be overlooked,—and gave such credit,
That future bridgrooms swore, and sighed, and paid it.

L.

The Blues, that tender tribe, who sigh o'er sonnets,
And with the pages of the last Review
Line the interior of their heads or bonnets,
Advanced in all their azure's highest hue :
They talked bad French of Spanish, and upon its
Late authors asked him for a hint or two ;
And which was softest, Russian or Castilian ?
And whether in his travels he saw Ilion ?

LI.

Juan, who was a little superficial,
And not in literature a great Drawcansir,
Examined by this learned and especial
Jury of matrons, scarce knew what to answer :
His duties warlike, loving, or official,
His steady application as a dancer,
Had kept him from the brink of Hippocrene,
Which now he found was blue instead of green..

LII.

However, he replied at hazard, with—

A modest confidance and calm assurance,
Which lent his learned lucubrations pith,
And passed for arguments of good endurance.

That prodigy, Miss Araminta Smith,

(Who at sixteen translated “ Hercules Furens”
Into as furious English) with her best look,
Set down his sayings in her common-place book.

LIII.

Juan knew several languages—as well—

He might—and brought them up with skill, in time
To save his fame with each accomplished belle,

Who still regretted that he did not rhyme.

There wanted but this requisite to swell

His qualities (with them) into sublime :
Lady Fitz-Frisky, and Miss Mævia Mannish,
Both longed extremely to be sung in Spanish.

LIV.

However, he did pretty well, and was
Admitted as an aspirant to all
The Coteries ; and, as in Banquo's glass,
At great assemblies or in parties small,
He saw ten thousand living authors pass,
That being about their average numeral ;
Also the eighty " greatest living poets,"
As every paltry magazine can show *it's*.

LV.

In twice five years the " greatest living poet,"
Like to the champion in the fisty ring,
Is called on to support his claim, or show it,
Although 'tis an imaginary thing.
Even I—albeit I'm sure I did not know it,
Nor sought of foolscap subjects to be king,—
Was reckoned, a considerable time,
The grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme.

LVI.

But Juan was my Moscow, and Faliero

My Leipsic, and my Mont Saint Jean seems Cain :

“ La Belle Alliance” of dunces down at zero,

Now that the Lion’s fall’n, may rise again :

But I will fall at least as fell my hero ;

Nor reign at all, or as a *monarch* reign ;

Or to some lonely isle of Jailors go,

With turncoat Southey for my turnkey Lowe.

LVII.

Sir Walter reigned before me ; Moore and Campbell

Before and after ; but now grown more holy,

The Muses upon Sion’s hill must ramble,

With poets almost clergymen, or wholly ;

*	*	*	*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*	*	*	*
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LVIII.

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LIX.

Then there's my gentle Euphues ; who, they say,
 Sets up for being a sort of *moral me* ;
 He'll find it rather difficult some day
 To turn out both, or either, it may be.
 Some persons think that Coleridge hath the sway ;
 And Wordsworth has supporters, two or three ;
 And that deep-mouthed Bæotian, " Savage Landor,"
 Has taken for a swan rogue Southey's gander.

LX.

John Keats, who was killed off by one critique,
Just as he really promised something great,
If not intelligible,—without Greek
Contrived to talk about the Gods of late,
Much as they might have been supposed to speak.
Poor fellow! His was an untoward fate :—
'Tis strange the mind, that very fiery particle,(s)
Should let itself be snuffed out by an Article.

LXI.

The list grows long of live and dead pretenders
To that which none will gain—or none will know
The Conqueror at least; who, ere time renders
His last award, will have the long grass grow
Above his burnt-out brain, and sapless cinders.
If I might augur, I should rate but low
Their chances;—they're too numerous, like the thirty
Mock tyrants, when Rome's annals waxed but dirty.

LXII.

This is the literary *lower* Empire,

Where the Prætorian bands take up the matter;—
A “dreadful trade,” like his who “gathers samphire,”
The insolent soldiery to soothe and flatter,
With the same feelings as you’d coax a vampire.

Now, were I once at home, and in good satire,
I’d try conclusions with those Janizaries,
And show them *what* an intellectual war is.

LXIII.

I think I know a trick or two, would turn

Their flanks;—but it is hardly worth my while
With such small gear to give myself concern:

Indeed I’ve not the necessary bile;
My natural temper’s really aught but stern,
And even my Muse’s worst reproof’s a smile;
And then she drops a brief and modern curtsy,
And glides away, assured she never hurts ye.

LXIV.

My Juan, whom I left in deadly peril
Amongst live poets and blue ladies, past
With some small profit through that field so sterile.
Being tired in time, and neither least nor last
Left it before he had been treated very ill ;
And henceforth found himself more gaily classed
Amongst the higher spirits of the day,
The sun's true son, no vapour, but a ray.

LXV.

His morns he passed in business—which dissected,
Was like all business, a laborious nothing,
That leads to lassitude, the most infected
And Centaur-Nessus garb of mortal clothing,
And on our sophas makes us lie dejected,
And talk in tender horrors of our loathing
All kinds of toil, save for our country's good—
Which grows no better, though 'tis time it should.

LXVI.

His afternoons he passed in visits, luncheons,
 Lounging, and boxing ; and the twilight hour
In riding round those vegetable puncheons
 Called "Parks," where there is neither fruit nor flower
Enough to gratify a bee's slight munchings ;
 But after all it is the only " bower,"
(In Moore's phrase) where the fashionable fair
Can form a slight acquaintance with fresh air.

LXVII.

Then dress, then dinner, then awakes the world !
 Then glare the lamps, then whirl the wheels, then roar
Through street and square fast flashing chariots, hurled
 Like harnessed meteors ; then along the floor
Chalk mimics painting ; then festoons are twirled ;
 Then roll the brazen thunders of the door,
Which opens to the thousand happy few
An earthly Paradise of " Or Molu."

LXVIII.

There stands the noble Hostess, nor shall sink
With the three-thousandth curtesy; there the Waltz,
The only dance which teaches girls to think,
Makes one in love even with its very faults.
Saloon, room, hall o'erflow beyond their brink,
And long the latest of arrivals halts,
'Midst royal dukes and dames condemned to climb,
And gain an inch of staircase at a time.

LXIX.

Thrice happy he, who, after a survey
Of the good company, can win a corner,
A door that's *in*, or boudoir *out* of the way,
Where he may fix himself, like small "Jack Horner,"
And let the Babel round run as it may,
And look on as a mourner, or a scorner,
Or an approver, or a mere spectator,
Yawning a little as the night grows later.

LXX.

But this won't do, save by and by ; and he
Who, like Don Juan, takes an active share,
Must steer with care through all that glittering sea
Of gems and plumes, and pearls and silks, to where
He deems it is his proper place to be ;
Dissolving in the waltz to some soft air,
Or prouder prancing with mercurial skill
Where Science marshals forth her own quadrille.

LXXI.

Or, if he dance not, but hath higher views
Upon an heiress or his neighbour's bride,
Let him take care that that which he pursues
Is not at once too palpably descried.
Full many an eager gentleman oft rues
His haste : impatience is a blundering guide
Amongst a people famous for reflection,
Who like to play the fool with circumspection.

LXXII.

But, if you can contrive, get next at supper ;

Or, if forestalled, get opposite and ogle :—

Oh, ye ambrosial moments ! always upper

In mind, a sort of sentimental bogle,

Which sits for ever upon Memory's crupper,

The ghost of vanished pleasures once in vogue ! Ill

Can tender souls relate the rise and fall

Of hopes and fears which shake a single ball.

LXXIII.

But these precautionary hints can touch

Only the common run, who must pursue,

And watch, and ward ; whose plans a word too much

Or little overturns ; and not the few

Or many (for the number's sometimes such)

Whom a good mien, especially if new,

Or fame, or name, for wit, war, sense, or nonsense,

Permits whate'er they please, or *did* not long since.

LXXIV.

Our hero, as a hero, young and handsome,
Noble, rich, celebrated, and a stranger,
Like other slaves of course must pay his ransom
Before he can escape from so much danger
As will environ a conspicuous man. Some
Talk about poetry, and "rack and manger,"
And ugliness, disease, as toil and trouble,—
I wish they knew the life of a young noble.

LXXV.

They are young, but know not youth—it is anticipated;
Handsome but wasted, rich without a sou;
Their vigour in a thousand arms is dissipated;
Their cash comes *from*, their wealth goes *to* a Jew;
Both senates see their nightly votes participated
Between the tyrant's and the tribunes' crew;
And having voted, dined, drank, gamed, and whored,
The family vault receives another lord.

LXXVI.

"Where is the world," cries Young, "at *eighty*? Where

"The world in which a man was born?" Alas!

Where is the world of *eight* years past? 'Twas there—

I look for it—'tis gone, a Globe of Glass!

Cracked, shivered, vanished, scarcely gazed on, ere

A silent change dissolves the glittering mass.

Statesmen, chiefs, orators, queens, patriots, kings,

And dandies, all are gone on the wind's wings.

LXXVII.

Where is Napoleon the Grand? God knows:

Where little Castlereagh? The devil can tell:

Where Grattan, Curran, Sheridan, all those

Who bound the bar or senate in their spell?

Where is the unhappy Queen, with all her woes?

And where the Daughter, whom the Isles loved well?

Where are those martyred Saints the Five per Cents?

And where—oh where the devil are the Rents!

LXXVIII.

Where's Brummel ? Dished. Where's Long Pole.

Wellesley ? Diddled.

Where's Whitbread ? Romilly ? Where's George
the Third ?

Where is his will ? (That's not so soon unriddled.)

And where is "Fum" the Fourth, our "royal bird?"

Gone down it seems to Scotland, to be fiddled

Unto by Sawney's violin, we have heard :

"Caw me, caw thee"—for six months hath been hatching

This scene of royal itch and loyal scratching.

LXXIX.

Where is Lord This ? And where my Lady That ?

The Honourable Mistresses and Misses ?

Some laid aside like an old opera hat,

Married, unmarried, and remarried : (this is

An evolution oft performed of late).

Where are the Dublin shouts—and London hisses ?

Where are the Grenvilles ? Turned as usual. Where

My friends the Whigs ? Exactly where they were.

LXXX.

Where are the Lady Carolines and Franceses ?

Divorced or doing thereanent. Ye annals
So brilliant, where the list of routs and dances is,—
Thou Morning Post, sole record of the pannels
Broken in carriages, and all the phantasies
Of fashion,—say what streams now fill those channels ?
Some die, some fly, some languish on the Continent,
Because the times have hardly left them *one* tenant.

LXXXI.

Some who once set their caps at cautious Dukes,
Have taken up at length with younger brothers :
Some heiresses have bit at sharpers' hooks ;
Some maids have been made wives, some merely
mothers ;
Others have lost their fresh and fairy looks :
In short, the list of alterations bothers :
There's little strange in this, but something strange is
The unusual quickness of these common changes.

LXXXII.

Talk not of seventy years as age ! in seven

I have seen more changes, down from monarchs to

The humblest individual under heaven,

Than might suffice a moderate century through.

I knew that nought was lasting, but now even

Change grows too changeable, without being new :

Nought's permanent among the human race,

Except the Whigs *not* getting into place.

LXXXIII.

I have seen Napoleon, who seemed quite a Jupiter,

Shrink to a Saturn. I have seen a Duke

(No matter which) turn politician stupider,

If that can well be, than his wooden look.

But it is time that I should hoist my "blue Peter,"

And sail for a new theme :—I have seen—and shook

To see it—the King hissed, and then cared ;

But don't pretend to settle which was best.

LXXXIV.

I have seen the landholders without a rap—

I have seen Johanna Southcote—I have seen
The House of Commons turned to a tax-trap—

I have seen that sad affair of the late Queen—
I have seen crowns worn instead of a fool's-cap—

I have seen a Congress doing all that's mean—
I have seen some nations like o'erloaded asses
Kick off their burthens—meaning the high classes.

LXXXV.

I have seen small poets, and great prozers, and
Interminable—*not eternal*—speakers—

I have seen the Funds at war with house and land—
I've seen the Country Gentlemen turn squeakers—
I've seen the people ridden o'er like sand

By slaves on horseback—I have seen malt liquors
Exchanged for "thin potations" by John Bull—
I have seen John half detect himself a fool.—

LXXXVI.

But "Carpe diem," Juan, "Carpe, carpe!"

To-morrow sees another race as gay
And transient, and devoured by the same harpy.

"Life's a poor player,"—then "play out the play,
"Ye villains!" and above all keep a sharp eye

Much less on what you do than what you say:
Be hypocritical, be cautious, be
Not what you *seem*, but always what you *see*.

LXXXVII.

But how shall I relate in other Cantos

Of what befell our hero in the land,
Which 'tis the common cry and lie to vaunt as

A moral country? But I hold my hand—
For I disdain to write an Atalantis;

But 'tis as well at once to understand,
You are *not* a moral people, and you know it
Without the aid of too sincere a poet.

LXXXVIII.

What Juan saw and underwent, shall be

My topic, with of course the due restriction

Which is required by proper courtesy ;

And recollect the work is only fiction,

And that I sing of neither mine nor me,

Though every scribe, in some slight turn of diction,

Will hint allusions never *meant*. Ne'er doubt

This—when I speak, I *don't hint*, but *speak out*.

LXXXIX.

Whether he married with the third or fourth

Offspring of some sage, husband-hunting Countess,

Or whether with some virgin of more worth

(I mean in Fortune's matrimonial bounties)

He took to regularly peopling Earth,

Of which your lawful awful wedlock fount is,—

Or whether he was taken in for damages,

For being too excursive in his homages,—

XC.

Is yet within the unread events of time.

Thus far, go forth, thou Lay! which I will back
Against the same given quantity of rhyme,

For being as much the subject of attack
As ever yet was any work sublime,

By those who love to say that white is black.
So much the better!—I may stand alone,
But would not change my free thoughts for a throne.

END OF CANTO THE ELEVENTH.

NOTES TO CANTO XI.

Note 1, page 112, stanza xix.

*Who on a lark, with black-eyed Sal (his blowing)
So prime, so swell, so nutty, and so knowing?*

The advance of science and of language has rendered it unnecessary to translate the above good and true English, spoken in its original purity by the select mobility and their patrons. The following is a stanza of a song which was very popular, at least in my early days:—

“ On the high toby-spice flash the muzzle,
“ In spite of each gallows old scout
“ If you at the spellken can’t hustle,
“ You’ll be hobbled in making a Clout.
“ Then your Blowing will wax gallows haughty,
“ When she hears of your scaly mistake,
“ She’ll surely turn snitch for the forty,
“ That her Jack may be regular weight.”

If there be any Gemman so ignorant as to require a traduction, I refer him to my old friend and corporeal pastor and master, John Jackson, Esq., Professor of Pugilism; who I trust still retains the strength and symmetry of his model of a form, together with his good humour, and athletic as well as mental accomplishments.

Note 2, page 117, stanza xxix.

St. James's Palace, and St. James's "Hells."

"Hells," gaming-houses. What their number may now be in this life, I know not. Before I was of age I knew them pretty accurately, both "gold" and "silver." I was once nearly called out by an acquaintance because, when he asked me where I thought that his soul would be found hereafter, I answered, "In Silver Hell."

Note 3, page 124, stanza xliii.

And therefore even I won't anent

This subject quote.

"Anent" was a Scotch phrase, meaning "concerning"—"with regard to." It has been made English by the Scotch Novels; and as the Frenchman said—"If it *be not*, *ought to be English*."

Note 4, page 127, stanza xlix.

The milliners who furnish "drapery Misses."

"Drapery Misses."—This term is probably any thing now but a *mystery*. It was however almost so to me when I first returned from the East in 1811—1812. It means a pretty, a highborn, a fashionable young female, well instructed by her friends, and furnished by her milliner with a wardrobe upon credit, to be repaid, when *married*, by the *husband*. The riddle was first read to me by a young and pretty heiress, on my praising the "drapery" of an "*untochered*" but "pretty virginities" (like Mrs. Anne Page) of the *then* day, which has

now been some years yesterday:—she assured me that the thing was common in London; and as her own thousands, and blooming looks, and rich simplicity of array, put any suspicion in her own case out of the question, I confess I gave some credit to the allegation. If necessary, authorities might be cited, in which case I could quote both “drapery” and the wearers. Let us hope, however, that it is now obsolete.

Note 5, page 133, stanza lx.

*'Tis strange the mind, that very fiery particle,
Should let itself be snuffed out by an Article.*

“Divinæ Particulam Auræ.”



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